the weekly
Standard

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DAVID BELLAVIA, OWEN WEST & WADE ZIRKLE

Iran's Proxy War

Hezbollah missiles hit northern Israel, July 13

William Kristol: Stand with Israel
Robert Satloff: The Rogues Strike Back
Lee Smith: Report from Beirut

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Joe Wilson's Latest 15 Minutes

It has been a tough few weeks for the publicity-hound Iraq war critic Joseph Wilson and his ex-CIA agent wife Valerie Plame. First, Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald disclosed that Karl Rove, the man Wilson wanted "frog-marched out of the White House in handcuffs" for supposedly leaking Plame's identity to columnist Robert Novak, wouldn't be charged with anything. Fitzgerald's decision makes it extremely unlikely that anyone will be charged with the alleged "crime" that triggered his lengthy investigation. To make matters worse, Plame's deal with Crown Publishing for her memoirs, worth some $2.5 million, was dissolved without explanation from either party.

So late last week, the Wilsons filed a civil suit against several senior Bush administration officials. The lawsuit is a joke. But it provided the couple with another few minutes in the spotlight, and the news media with another opportunity to misreport the basic facts of this entire sorry episode.

In virtually every story about the case, there is a summary paragraph. And in virtually every story about the case, that summary paragraph is wrong. Most of them read like this, from an Associated Press story on July 14 by one Toni Locy:

> The CIA had sent Wilson to Niger in early 2002 to determine whether there was any truth to reports that Iraq had made a deal to acquire yellowcake uranium from the government of Niger to make a nuclear weapon. Wilson discounted the reports, but the allegation that Iraq was trying to buy uranium from Africa ended up in President Bush's 2003 State of the Union address.

A *Washington Post* article tells us:

> Despite Wilson's findings, Bush referred to the Niger uranium charges in his 2003 State of the Union speech outlining his reasons for going to war in March of that year.

You get the idea: Bush lied, people died.

We refer our colleagues once more to the Senate Intelligence Committee Report on the Iraq-Niger-Wilson affair. Wilson did not "discount" the reports of Iraqi uranium shopping when he was debriefed by the CIA about his trip. According to the Senate report (p. 46), a CIA reports officer gave Wilson's reporting a grade of "good." The officer "judged that the most important fact in the report was that the Nigerien officials admitted that the Iraqi delegation had traveled there in 1999, and that the Nigerien Prime Minister believed that the Iraqis were interested in uranium."

From Conclusion #13 of the Senate Report, we learn that "for most analysts, the information in the [Wilson] report lent more credibility to the original Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports on the uranium deal."

There's more. A month after Bush's 2003 State of the Union, the CIA was still defending Bush's statement. On February 27, 2003, the CIA responded to a letter from Senator Carl Levin asking for more information on "what the U.S. [intelligence community] knows about Saddam Hussein seeking significant quantities of uranium from Africa." The CIA said it had reporting to "suggest Iraq had attempted to acquire uranium from Niger."

And where did the U.S. government get the idea that Iraq was seeking uranium from Niger? Both from the original reports that led to Wilson's trip and—you guessed it—from "the CIA intelligence report on the former ambassador's trip to Niger." ♦

Mark Lane Returns

Just when we thought that the CIA, ExxonMobil, Mossad, and the British Royal Family had finally gotten away with it, The Scrapbook learns that Mohamed Al-Fayed, the Egyptian-born proprietor of Harrod's and father of Princess Diana's last boyfriend, Dodi, has commissioned none other than attorney Mark Lane to reinvestigate the 1997 deaths of Diana and Dodi.

Clearly, Mr. Al-Fayed is serious. For in the people's republic of conspiracy theories, the 79-year-old Mr. Lane is a Founding Father. He is the author of *Rush to Judgment*, the 1965 bestseller that first claimed the Warren Commission covered up the truth about the Kennedy assassination (Lee Harvey Oswald was a patsy), and over the years, he has attached himself to the causes of Martin Luther King's murderer, James Earl Ray (another patsy), and the Rev. Jim Jones of Jonestown fame (not a patsy but, presumably, a much-misunderstood man). His labors on behalf of New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison inspired Oliver Stone's immortal *JFK*.

For the sentimental old Scrapbook, the zenith of Lane's career in public service was the 1968 presidential election, when he was the vice-presidential candidate of the Peace and Freedom party. (*Who was his running mate? Answer in a moment.) Yet readers will note that Lane has not exactly been on the cutting edge of paranoia for the past few decades, which explains our pleasure

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at his reappearance in the news. Now, a new generation of conspiracy buffs, from Rep. Cynthia McKinney, D-Ga., to Sidney Blumenthal, to the bloggers on Daily Kos, may watch a master at the top of his form.

"I have met with Mr. Al-Fayed and reviewed some of the evidence he has uncovered," Lane told the *New York Post* last week. "My preliminary inquiry reveals that there are numerous and serious unanswered questions which I intend to pursue with my staff at Mr. Al-Fayed's request." Until, of course, Mr. Al-Fayed's checkbook is depleted. (*Answer: Dick Gregory.) ♦

Times in Denial?

Despite the fizzle of the Joe Wilson leak investigation (see first item, above) *New York Times* website readers can still peruse the paper's interactive "Timeline of a Leak." Despondent editors have perhaps understandably lagged in updating the feature. "Current questions swirl around whether or not Karl Rove will be indicted," it helpfully tells us. No doubt more attention would have been paid if Rove had been indicted.

Another highlight from that timeline:

> October 4, 2003. In a column on the Wilsons' political donations, columnist Robert Novak reveals that "Valerie E. Wilson identified herself as an 'analyst' with 'Brewster-Jennings and Associates'. No such firm is listed anywhere," potentially revealing a CIA front company.

Ah, yes—the good old days, when the *New York Times* was alarmed over national security secrets being blown. ♦

Scoop Lives!

In the early 1970s, Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson of Washington co-founded the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, a group of hawkish Democrats who reached across party lines to promote a strong national defense in the face of Soviet expansionism. Today, "Scoop Jackson" Democrats like Sen. Joe Lieberman are increasingly rare, and increasingly abhorred by their own party. But in Europe, a Scoop revival may be stirring.

In Britain, a "bi-partisan group of progressives and democrats" have formed the Henry Jackson Society (*henryjacksonsociety.org*) to advance the principle that "democratic governments should consider the internal character of foreign states when dealing with them." They have just released a new book we highly recommend, *The British Moment: The Case for Democratic Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century*—"a response to the failure—on strategic as well as idealist grounds—of a generation of 'realist' policies." The book's authors recommend "for Britain—and its partners and allies—a foreign and security policy based on a 'democratic geopolitics', which breaks with repressive regimes, holds out to their peoples a better future." Hear, hear!

Now if only a Scoop revival would take hold among our Democratic friends here in the States. ♦

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Casual

Death to the Environment

A car dealer in Washington, Don Beyer Volvo, is offering a new promotion. If you buy one of their cars, the dealership will give you free tickets to Al Gore's global warming documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*. Mr. Beyer is a Democrat in good standing, having been lieutenant governor of Virginia and national treasurer of the Dean for America campaign, so he must be down with the global warming program. But giving away movie tickets with the purchase of every climate-destroying luxury automobile (the 2005 Volvo XC90 gets 15 mpg in the city and 20 mpg on the highway) probably isn't, in the long run, the most effective way to save the planet.

Lots of businesses are trying to profit in the name of the environment these days. My personal favorite are hotels that ask guests to reuse dirty towels and sheets.

On a recent trip to Las Vegas, I stayed at the Monte Carlo, one of the themed monstrosities on the Strip. In the bathroom was a card asking me to "please join Monte Carlo's effort to conserve water by using your towels more than once." On the nightstand was another card imploring me to "please help protect our environment" by not having the bed linens changed during my stay. I was moved by these pleas, I really was. Except that outside the hotel are two gigantic fountains spewing precious water into the arid, desert air, 24 hours a day. It struck me that the Monte Carlo's concern for the environment might simply be an attempt to save on laundry costs.

I'm normally a friend of Gaia, or at least a good acquaintance. I like hiking and being outdoors, so long as there aren't insects. Or mud. And I don't care for the way tall grass makes your skin itch. But even a nature lover like me has limits. When I'm paying $259 a night, I want fresh linens.

And it's not as if the hotels really cared about our Earth Mother. If they did, they'd give a discount rate to customers who put up with damp towels. What's happened is that Big Business has figured out how to use our environmental consciences against us. We greens who love the environment are now the unwitting tools of our planet's destruction. Hotels profit from our willingness to conserve, and car dealerships lure us into luxury SUVs under the pretense of supporting Al Gore.

Darren Gygi

It's an insidious plot, and the only way to foil it is to kill the environment. If the movie *Speed* taught me anything, it's that in a hostage situation, game theory dictates that you have to shoot the hostages to prove they aren't valuable. That's how you get the upper hand on the tree-killers or Dennis Hopper or whoever. If we want to save the environment, we've got to show we don't care about it.

It won't be easy, but I have a plan. For starters, when you check into a hotel, call maid service and tell them you want clean sheets every day. Then leave your used towels on the bathroom floor, indicating that you'd like a clean set. Then, take any unused towels and washcloths and put them on the floor, too. Just to show you mean business. It's also probably a good idea to take the extra soaps and lotions. A well-placed 2-ounce bottle of green tea olive oil moisturizing shampoo can wreak havoc on an ecosystem.

When you get home from vacation, go straight to the Internet. First, there's *showerbuddy.com*, where you can buy a Zoe triple showerhead. In 1992, the federal government passed a law requiring that "all faucet fixtures" have a maximum waterflow of 2.5 gallons per minute. The geniuses at Zoe noticed that the statute said nothing about putting multiple fixtures on the same faucet. Seven and a half gallons per minute sends a heck of a message.

Then there's the WC. Before he was crusading against global warming, Sen. Gore was lowering the flush capacity of American toilets from 3.5 gallons to 1.6 gallons. But the secret is that the toilet-makers manufacture bowls and tanks separately, and for each bowl they make a 1.6 gallon tank for the States and a 3.5 gallon tank for Canada. Our neighbors to the north sell the big-flush tanks on eBay all the time. You don't even need to feel guilty about this little act of defiance, since if the Canadians are doing it, it must be virtuous.

Killing the environment will take time. This big ball of mud is pretty resilient. But if we love our planet—and really, who doesn't?—then we have to show corporate America how little we care about it. Only then will it be safe to be an environmentalist again.

Jonathan V. Last

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"Congress could unwittingly interfere with the development of a more robust Internet, capable of delivering more multimedia, faster, in two directions."

The Oregonian, Editorial, May 15, 2006

"By getting the U.S. federal government involved in a phenomenon – the Internet – that has to date largely avoided regulation, **'net neutrality' supporters are inviting the bane of this incredible communication system: the law of unintended consequences."**

The Arizona Republic, Editorial, June 26, 2006

" 'Don't ruin the Internet' is a slogan with a lot of merit. But it comes with a modern corollary, which is **'Don't regulate what isn't broken.' "**

The Wall Street Journal, Editorial, May 18, 2006

"Consumers will benefit if Congress encourages competition. It breeds more choices, lower prices and innovation. **Net neutrality stops all that in its tracks."**

Chicago Tribune, Editorial, June 26, 2006

"If you want innovation on the Internet, you need better pipes: ones that are faster, less susceptible to hackers and spammers, or smarter in ways that nobody has yet thought of. The lack of incentives for pipe innovation is more pressing than the lack of incentives to create new Web services."

The Washington Post, Editorial, June 12, 2006

"There is nothing neutral about tying the hands of network operators. Doing so would only lead to Internet traffic jams and higher costs for consumers, fundamentally altering the lightly regulated Internet, where commerce and ideas move at nearly the speed of light."

South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Editorial, June 22, 2006

"To transition from copper wires to fiber optics Internet service providers need Wall Street investors to see broadband as a worthy investment. Charging the heaviest users of those networks extra is the natural market solution. **Google and Amazon just want to continue their free ride."**

The Washington Times, Editorial, June 12, 2006

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Nay to NATO

Thanks to Max Boot for his concise and perceptive analysis of NATO's nebulous ability to respond to the real-life military needs of Afghanistan ("Proactive Self-Defense," July 3 / July 10). Who can doubt that NATO will quickly begin crumbling as member nations start pulling troops out if any end up attacked and killed by Islamist forces, once NATO fully invests itself in the turbulent southern region?

NATO is in no way ready to respond to attacks on the ground, nor, with its many prohibitive rules, is it even agile enough to do so. Boot couldn't be more right not to be "sanguine" about their probable success. And who else but a man who reads too much 19th-century history would use the word "sanguine" so well, anyway?

Warner Todd Huston
Chicago, Ill.

Blog-viating

Regarding Matt Labash's playful, amusing, and generally accurate "Riding with the Kossacks" (June 26): As a blogger (albeit one who rarely reads Daily Kos), I can acknowledge that the majority of the blogosphere—not just Kos—tends to draw in like-minded thinkers and posters in order to create something of an "amen corner" for their particular subjects. But are blog readers much different from the majority of people who choose to listen to Rush Limbaugh or NPR, to watch Bill O'Reilly or Michael Moore, or to read the *New Republic* or The Weekly Standard?

In each of these instances, the average listener, viewer, or reader is likely to share the fundamental assumptions of the programs he watches and the publications he reads. Whether we like it or not, most human beings simply prefer to have their preconceived notions about the world continuously confirmed, rather than challenged.

Bobby Bran
Orange County, Calif.

Matthew Continetti's "Betting on the Bloggers" (June 26) quotes

Sen. Harry Reid as saying that bloggers are an "unstoppable force." In truth, though, I think the blogosphere is not quite all it's made out to be. Within their limited, online world, bloggers and their readers accept opinions as truths whose import increases with repeated cycles of observation, analysis, and bloviation. To the blogger, a spattering of like-minded correspondents feels like a vast audience.

Bloggers resemble a group of people trading Pokémon cards among themselves, driving up the card values, not realizing that they themselves are the source of inflation and that outside the group the cards are not worth the value of the paper stock they are printed on. Most of us, at least for the time being, go about our day with little notice paid to the blogosphere.

David J. Hinn
Houston, Tex.

Poetic Briefs

Aaron MacLean's review of "The Ode Less Travelled" by Stephen Fry has unlocked my inner poet ("Bad to Verse," June 26). While poring over the parody in the same issue, I noticed a spelling error in "Apocalypse NEA," purportedly composed by Donald Hall, poet laureate. You wrote, "Never again! will Mapplethorpe's / Entwinèd men perspire on the / Rough-hewn sheets of flowerbeds / And taunt the prosecutor's brief." In the original, I believe, the last line read, "and taunt the prosecutor's *briefs*."

Elias Young
Delta, Colo.

• • •

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the weekly Standard

It's Our War

Why is this Arab-Israeli war different from all other Arab-Israeli wars? Because it's not an Arab-Israeli war. Most of Israel's traditional Arab enemies have checked out of the current conflict. The governments of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia are, to say the least, indifferent to the fate of Hamas and Hezbollah. The Palestine Liberation Organization (Fatah) isn't a player. The prime mover behind the terrorist groups who have started this war is a non-Arab state, Iran, which wasn't involved in any of Israel's previous wars.

What's happening in the Middle East, then, isn't just another chapter in the Arab-Israeli conflict. What's happening is an Islamist-Israeli war. You might even say this is part of the Islamist war on the West—but is India part of the West? Better to say that what's under attack is liberal democratic civilization, whose leading representative right now happens to be the United States.

An Islamist-Israeli conflict may or may not be more dangerous than the old Arab-Israeli conflict. Secular Arab nationalism was, after all, also capable of posing an existential threat to Israel. And the Islamist threat to liberal democracy may or may not turn out to be as dangerous as the threats posed in the last century by secular forms of irrationalism (fascism) and illiberalism (communism). But it is a new and different threat. One needs to keep this in mind when trying to draw useful lessons from our successes, and failures, in dealing with the threats of the 20th century.

Here, however, is one lesson that does seem to hold: States matter. Regimes matter. Ideological movements become more dangerous when they become governing regimes of major nations. Communism became really dangerous when it seized control of Russia. National socialism became really dangerous when it seized control of Germany. Islamism became really dangerous when it seized control of Iran—which then became, as it has been for the last 27 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

No Islamic Republic of Iran, no Hezbollah. No Islamic Republic of Iran, no one to prop up the Assad regime in Syria. No Iranian support for Syria (a secular government that has its own reasons for needing Iranian help and for supporting Hezbollah and Hamas), little state sponsorship of Hamas and Hezbollah. And no Shiite Iranian revolution, far less of an impetus for the Saudis to finance the export of the Wahhabi version of Sunni Islam as a competitor to Khomeini's claim for leadership of militant Islam—and thus no Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and perhaps no Hamas either.

It's of course true that Hamas—an arm of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood—is at odds ideologically with Shia Iran, and that Shia and Sunni seem inclined to dislike, even slaughter, each other elsewhere in the Middle East. But temporary alliances of convenience are no less dangerous because they are temporary. Tell the Poles of 1939, and the French of 1940, that they really had little to worry about because the Nazi-Soviet pact was bound to fall apart.

The war against radical Islamism is likely to be a long one. Radical Islamism isn't going away anytime soon. But it will make a big difference how strong the state sponsors, harborers, and financiers of radical Islamism are. Thus, our focus should be less on Hamas and Hezbollah, and more on their paymasters and real commanders—Syria and Iran. And our focus should be not only on the regional war in the Middle East, but also on the global struggle against radical Islamism.

For while Syria and Iran are enemies of Israel, they are also enemies of the United States. We have done a poor job of standing up to them and weakening them. They are now testing us more boldly than one would have thought possible a few years ago. Weakness is provocative. We have been too weak, and have allowed ourselves to be perceived as weak.

The right response is renewed strength—in supporting the governments of Iraq and Afghanistan, in standing with Israel, and in pursuing regime change in Syria and Iran. For that matter, we might consider countering this act of Iranian aggression with a military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities. Why wait? Does anyone think a nuclear Iran can be contained? That the current regime will negotiate in good faith? It would be easier to act sooner rather than later. Yes, there would be repercussions—and they would be healthy ones, showing a strong America that has rejected further appeasement.

But such a military strike would take a while to organize. In the meantime, perhaps President Bush can fly from the silly G8 summit in St. Petersburg—a summit that will most likely convey a message of moral confusion and political indecision—to Jerusalem, the capital of a nation that stands with us, and is willing to fight with us, against our common enemies. This is our war, too.

—*William Kristol*

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the weekly Standard

Stem the Tide

This week, the Senate will take up legislation already passed by the House (H.R. 810) to authorize federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells harvested by destroying human embryos left over in fertility clinics. Since August 2001, under a policy established by President Bush, federally funded research has been limited to embryonic stem cell lines that already existed. If the bill passes, the president will veto it. And without the votes to override, the current policy will remain unchanged.

For five years, there has been a sustained effort to overturn the limits set by the president. Advocates of federal funding for research on new stem cell lines have made such funding a litmus test for being "pro-science." Prestigious journals like the *New England Journal of Medicine* give reports on embryo research special consideration for publication. Meanwhile, advocates downplay advances that do not involve embryo destruction. Reversing the Bush policy—even forcing a veto—would be the crowning achievement of this campaign. It would create, so the thinking goes, a great election issue: Progressives are pro-cure and pro-science. Bush is not.

But as often happens in politics, when momentum builds for a cause, that cause may already be on the way to irrelevancy. The facts on the ground change. H.R. 810 would fund research on so-called "spare" human embryos. Such embryos, however, offer an inefficient and ineffectual road to medical progress: inefficient, because procuring consent to use leftover embryos is a cumbersome process, and the vast majority of couples who produced them do not want them used for research; ineffectual, because using "spare" embryos does not allow scientists to control the genetic makeup of the stem cells, which is (as they have told us) essential for building useful models of disease and developing rejection-proof therapies.

While the political fight over the "spares" has raged, some scientists seem to have found a better way forward: a way to get the genetically controlled stem cells they need without destroying human embryos. A second Senate bill (S. 2754), cosponsored by Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum (usually opponents in the embryo research debate), would fund and promote such research. These alternative methods are better ethically, because they do not treat developing human life as raw material; better scientifically, because they would provide designer stem cells; and better democratically, because they do not force those who believe embryo destruction is a grave moral wrong to fund it with taxpayer dollars.

The most important arguments for maintaining the Bush policy are moral: The federal government should not be a party to the destruction of nascent human lives. Yes, such embryos might be left over in fertility clinics, but the fact that they are unwanted does not change what they are or give us a license to destroy them. But even for those who are agnostic about the moral standing of human embryos, a policy that encourages the expanded use of federal dollars for research on "spare" embryos makes little sense when more promising alternatives apparently exist.

Of course, we cannot predict the scientific future—a fact too often ignored by those promising to cure "100 million" Americans if only we funded embryo research without limits. Even the most promising scientific alternatives are speculative. But this much we do know: Destroying more "spare" embryos is unlikely to advance stem cell science significantly. Rather, using federal dollars to fund such research will only lead to demands that further ethical lines be crossed. When using the "spares" doesn't produce results, the demand will be to fund the creation and destruction of embryonic human clones, an even more damaging leap into the brave new world.

We should instead be establishing barriers to such a world. And fortunately, the Senate is poised to consider a third bioethics bill (S. 3504) prohibiting "fetal farming." Such an idea is not science fiction. Scientists could plausibly say that we need to encourage the gestation of human embryos to later developmental stages, when potentially more useful stabilized stem cells could be obtained and organ primordia could be "harvested." Establishing a preemptive moral limit on such schemes would embody an important truth: There are some things we should never do, even in the name of progress. The moral history of mankind, as Paul Ramsey once said, is more important than its medical history.

So: no funding for the destruction of "spare" embryos; generous funding of alternative methods of producing embryonic-like stem cells; and banning "fetal farming." This outcome would hardly prevent every abuse—leaving human cloning and the new eugenics entirely unregulated. But after five years of difficult debate, we may achieve in the next weeks a decent outcome—for now.

—Eric Cohen and William Kristol

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"If the legislators… insist on neutrality, we will be happy.

If they do not put it in, we will be less happy but then we will have to wait and see whether or not there actually is any abuse."

Vint Cerf, Google VP

Reuters, July 5, 2006

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Bombs over Beirut

Hezbollah starts a war.

BY LEE SMITH

Beirut

IT SEEMS LIKE only yesterday that a Hezbollah deputy in Lebanon's parliament was saying that even if Iran wound up playing his beloved Brazilian squad in a World Cup match, he would have to side with Ronaldinho and Co. In the last 48 hours, though, it has become clear that when the stakes are really high, Hezbollah is always going to side with Iran, even if this means holding all of Lebanon hostage.

As I write on the Friday evening of July 14, Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport is closed from the bombs dropped by Israel on Thursday morning. Many of the roads are also closed, and the Israeli navy has blockaded the sea route out. In the year since the so-called Cedar Revolution, much of the world has been looking to Lebanon, watching and hoping for the best. Now under siege, it is time for Lebanon to look at itself and wonder how it got here.

In the Sunni neighborhood of Hamra, the streets are virtually empty. A parking attendant has taken down his large Iranian flag, but still has two pictures of Hezbollah general secretary Hassan Nasrallah taped to his booth. I don't know how long the Sunni locals will indulge his infatuation, for the Sunnis are angry. Hezbollah's July 12 incursion into northern Israel and abduction of two Israeli soldiers is likely going to cost them and their country billions of dollars, taking into account the lost revenue in summer tourism, a major part of Lebanon's economy.

The Christians, too, are mad, even though their most popular leader, Michel Aoun, had a "paper of understanding" with Hezbollah, essentially tying their political destinies together. For as long as Lebanon was able to quietly ignore international demands to disarm Hezbollah's militia and had effectively forgotten that their country shared a border with the most powerful military in the region, Aoun's agreement seemed politically clever. Now Ashrafieh, the predominantly Christian section of the city, is quiet, with the wealthier people already having left for their second homes in the mountains and the rest to stay with relatives there. Monot and Gemmayzeh, the two Ashrafieh neighborhoods that have made Beirut a world-famous nightlife spot, are silent.

Meanwhile, the Daheyh, the Shiite suburbs of Beirut where Hezbollah's Nasrallah was headquartered before his home was destroyed, has been shelled repeatedly since early Friday morning. The Israelis have been targeting Shiite regions throughout Lebanon, towns in the south of the country and the Bekaa valley as well as the Daheyh. A community that was historically regarded as Lebanon's unwashed masses is paying a heavy price for putting its political hopes in the hands of an Iranian-backed Islamist militia.

I was talking to two young middle-class Shiites, a man and a woman, both secular and moderate, who nonetheless expressed a fair amount of support for Hezbollah. Why, they wondered, should the rest of the country be unhappy with them? Why did it matter to other Lebanese if the Shiites were the only community under Israeli attack? I was astonished, not so much that they were willing to ignore that the airport, electricity, and other infrastructure belonged to all of Lebanon, and that even before the Israeli air force reduces Hezbollah strongholds to dust, Hezbollah fighters will move to non-Shiite neighborhoods in search of human shields. What I can't understand is that anyone not actively seeking "martyrdom" would think that this was, for anyone, a fight worth waging. It is good that Hezbollah should be put down, but it is sickening to consider that the other Lebanese communities might regard the lives of ordinary Shiites as being of little worth, and consider that the wretched of the Earth are getting what they deserve.

One of the most popular questions in Lebanon right now is: Since Syria provides material support for Hezbollah, why isn't anyone taking this out on Syria? The Syrians are evidently wondering the same and keeping their heads down. Unlike in Amman, where there have been numerous angry protests against the recent Israeli attacks, sources in Syria tell me that in Damascus the streets are quiet. At the border crossing out of Lebanon in the north, the Syrians are even helpfully giving visas to Americans, a practice they had stopped six months ago.

Why not Syria? Sure the Assad regime is a troublemaking, dictatorial ally of Iran. But that hardly excuses Lebanon of responsibility for its own affairs, even if Prime Minister Fouad Siniora insists that the country's democratically elected government bears no responsibility for this week's events. Apparently, it is difficult for this same government to remember that a party the State Department calls a terrorist organization is itself part of the government. The failure of a sovereign state to exercise control over its territory is a very big problem.

In fact, it's a problem that is brought to the fore by the White

Lee Smith, a Hudson Institute visiting fellow based in Beirut, is writing a book on Arab culture.

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House's promotion of democracy in the Middle East. It is probably true that, given a voice in their own government, ordinary Arabs would be less tempted by extremism and more prone to turn their energies to improving their societies and economies. However, democracy promotion also means making Arab governments act like real governments, accountable for what goes on within their borders and for the violence their people export beyond their frontiers.

Lebanon, in this sense, is not a responsible state. It is just a glamorously seductive version of irresponsible regimes across the Middle East, whose people chant "Death to America" and incite violence against the United States in the mosques, schools, and media while the government says, well, we have nothing to do with those bad people, and it is not our problem. You want them to calm down? Then change your policies; we have better things to do, like worrying about how to stay in power and pad our bank accounts.

We have all been happy to cheer on the rebirth of democracy in Lebanon this past year. But the Lebanese are suspicious: Are you still with us? they ask. Or is Washington going to make a deal behind our backs with the Syrians, as you did back in 1990? Here it is the Lebanese who betray faulty historical memories. Yes, America looked away as Hafez al Assad turned Lebanon into a satrapy of Damascus. But some years earlier, significant parts of Lebanon made a deal with Syria and Iran over the dead bodies of American diplomats, soldiers, sailors, and Marines, and the captive bodies of journalists, educators, and missionaries held hostage. The Lebanese have conveniently forgotten that there is an awful lot of American blood on their hands.

And so Michel Aoun is oblivious to why the United States is angry at the deal he cut with Hezbollah. And maybe he has half a point. Saad Hariri—son of the prime minister whose assassination by Syria sparked the Cedar Revolution—gets to meet with the president of the United States, yet Hariri's Future movement has also publicly stood with Hezbollah. (According to Prime Minister Siniora, that's because Hezbollah is not a terrorist group or a militia; rather it is the "resistance.")

It is not clear why so many analysts, both Arab and Western, assume that the government of Israel has let the situation get away from it. If it seems that Hamas and Hezbollah, with Iranian support, coordinated the operations that touched off this crisis, it also seems that Israel was not caught entirely off guard. For its Lebanon campaign is not merely punitive; it is strategic. The Israeli air force has destroyed Lebanese airports and the road to Syria eastward—i.e., Hezbollah's main lines of weapons transport. In bombing the road south from Beirut, they are separating the Daheyh from Hezbollah's southern strongholds. That is, the Party of God is being cut off from Syria and Iran and isolated from the rest of Lebanon. Hezbollah is being split in two and cut to ribbons.

Many have suggested that Hezbollah rockets in Lebanon represent a deterrent against any Israeli, or U.S., attack on Iran. What if, instead, they only represent a big target painted in the middle of South Lebanon? If Iran had been counting on this deterrent, its policymakers may now be asking themselves how much the Hezbollah card is going to be worth in another two weeks. Maybe a lot, maybe nothing at all.

After the White House has calmed nerves and asserted the need for more talks, more consultation, more diplomacy—apparently its preferred mode of operations of late—it will be interesting to see what conclusions the Bush administration draws from Israel's current campaign in its own dealings with Iran, and also with the "insurgents" in Iraq. We may now be seeing the Spanish Civil War phase of the global war on terror, in which all the significant ideological and military alliances of the next decade can be discerned. Someday, the United States will have to confront these same players—Iran, Syria, Shiite militias, Sunni extremists, and their chains of financial support, some leading back to the Gulf Arab states—even if it prefers not to do so. From the Israeli experience we can draw at least two important lessons:

First, it is a waste of time and prestige to try to "moderate" Islamist groups that have not already been brought to heel, and it is foolish to believe that once in power they will become accountable. Hamas will not take responsibility for traffic lights, never mind for its military and terror operations. After Lebanon's 2005 elections, Hezbollah was actually given ministerial portfolios; now, without the consent of anyone else in the government, it has dragged all of Lebanon into its battle with Israel. Only in some parallel universe do militant parties moderate their policies once they are rewarded for their extremism with power. Attempting to co-opt Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias into the Iraqi political process, for instance, looks increasingly like a fool's errand.

Second, it is useful to recall that, among other reasons offered for the war in Iraq, many believed an unspoken purpose was for the United States to show that it was not, as bin Laden claimed, a paper tiger. The problem is that if you can't say such things aloud then you are not going to be capable of mustering the force needed to teach lessons in the Middle East. Washington has for three years been trying to define an American victory in Iraq. A better question is: What will defeat look like for the bin Laden types? What will it take for them to acknowledge that they have been routed by the United States?

Israel's experience since withdrawing from south Lebanon in 2000 and Gaza last year suggests that terror groups do not ever concede defeat. Victory for the jihadists means one survivor left to describe it as such. ♦

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Bush's Fab Five

The president's favorite foreign leaders.

BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENT BUSH, en route to last weekend's G8 summit in Russia, paused for a day in what used to be Communist East Germany, where he learned from German chancellor Angela Merkel the proper way to carve a roasted boar.

Earlier in the day she and Bush had sat in front of a fireplace in the town hall of Stralsund, Merkel's hometown, and chatted. "It's a little warm for a fire," Bush noted, though there was no fire going in the fireplace. They conferred privately past the scheduled time for their joint press conference. At the press event, the president referred to Merkel as "Angela." He said: "We found that there is a lot that we agree on."

Of course, there is. Bush knew this from her visit to Washington last January, shortly after she had become head of a new Christian Democrat-led government in Germany. Following talks at the White House, Merkel predicted their meeting "will open up, also, a new chapter, as I hope, in our relationship"—the one between Germany and the United States. And it did.

Merkel is one of Bush's favorite foreign leaders. From discussions with administration officials and watching the president, I've come up with a list of the leaders Bush gets along with best. There are five of them. Besides Merkel, they are the prime ministers of Australia (John Howard), Japan (Junichiro Koizumi), Denmark (Anders Fogh Rasmussen), and Great Britain (Tony Blair). The new conservative prime minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, is a potential Bush favorite.

The president was close to at least three foreign leaders now out of office. Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, who claimed to be Bush's best friend in Europe, was ousted as prime minister in a recent election. José María Aznar of Spain stepped down after two terms. Ariel Sharon was a cabinet minister when Bush met him on a visit to Israel in 1998, and struck up a friendship that continued after Sharon became prime minister. He suffered a massive stroke earlier this year.

Two of Bush's least favorite foreign leaders have recently lost their jobs: Merkel's predecessor in Germany, Gerhard Schröder, and Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada. And at the G8 summit he encountered two with whom he has a difficult relationship: President Jacques Chirac of France and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Bush is drawn to iconoclastic, plainspoken leaders who don't reflexively follow the party line in their countries. Blair, for example, is a liberal hawk who agrees with the president on Iraq, while most of his Labour party brethren don't. Rasmussen is in a somewhat similar situation. Koizumi is a reformer who surprisingly took on Japan's inefficient postal savings system and won.

The president's favorites don't have to be conservatives. Blair dislikes American economic policy. Merkel has urged that Guantánamo prison be closed. Rasmussen has worried aloud about abuse at Abu Ghraib prison and possible murders at Haditha in Iraq. But, an aide says, "the president is looking for people who see the world as he sees it." That means, at a minimum, they support his post-invasion policy in Iraq and regard the spread of democracy as important.

Certainly Merkel does. She backs Bush on Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. In Washington, she denounced as "totally unacceptable" what President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has said about wiping out Israel and doubting the Holocaust. "We will certainly not be intimidated by a country such as Iran."

As chancellor, Merkel took as her first major initiative the repairing of relations with the Unites States. She has largely succeeded. Bush was especially receptive to her overtures after his poor relationship with Schröder. He not only opposed Bush on Iraq, but he won reelection in 2002 by emphasizing his differences with the president and his policies.

Given Blair's ideological kinship and chumminess with President Clinton, he and the more conservative, less glib Bush were not expected to become fast friends. But they have. As British prime minister, Blair knew his most important job was preserving the so-called special relationship with America. And he also sees himself as a kind of ambassador between the United States and Europe.

For his part, Bush likes leaders who keep their word. No surprise there. "You don't make promises idly," the aide says. Bush found Blair to be such a person. And Blair, it turned out, had the same concern. As much as he liked Clinton, Blair never knew if Clinton would follow through on anything. With Bush, he knows. So while the Bush-Blair relationship isn't as warm as Blair's was with Clinton, it is based on trust and, of course, a shared view of England and America's role in the world, particularly in Iraq and fighting terrorism.

Koizumi, an administration official says, "has broken the mold in terms of a Japanese prime minister." Instead of polite but not very candid diplomatic talk, Koizumi "speaks directly." He and Bush agree that the United States must be the dominant power in the Pacific, in effect

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assuring Japan's security. He and Bush have brought Japan and the United States closer together geopolitically. "There's a special feeling there" between Bush and Koizumi, the official says. "The president doesn't go to Graceland with every visiting leader."

Howard, too, is committed to strengthening the ties between his country and America, and to keeping the United States active in Asia and the Pacific. He was reelected in 2004 after a campaign in which he ardently defended his deployment of troops to Iraq. After visiting the White House in May, Howard delivered a strongly pro-America speech in Chicago. "None of our global challenges," he said, "can be secured without American power and American purpose." Howard continued: "I share your president's resolve to prevail in Iraq. Australia is with you. We will stay the course. We will finish the job." No wonder Bush is so fond of Howard.

Rasmussen is a surprise. He's very un-European. Bush likes Rasmussen so much he invited him to Camp David. "I was checking back," Bush told reporters. "I think it's been over two years since we've had a foreign leader come and visit us here." Rasmussen broke with the Danish tradition of making foreign policy through consensus. He decided on his own to back the United States in Iraq. Denmark currently has more than 500 troops in Iraq. He and the president, Rasmussen told reporters at Camp David, "agree on the very reason for being engaged in Iraq: to put an end to oppression and to promote freedom, democracy, and human rights."

Finally, there's Harper, the new Canadian leader. As a social conservative, he's probably closer to Bush than any foreign leader. Bush was impressed with his boldness, despite a fragile parliamentary position, in resolving the longstanding trade dispute with the United States over softwood lumber. Like Bush, Harper is a sports fan. His sport is hockey. If only he liked baseball. ♦

Finally Some Rational Judges

New York's top court upholds marriage.

BY DAVID M. WAGNER

On June 6, when the highest state court in New York dealt a setback to same-sex marriage, editorialists denounced it as being "on the wrong side of history." These editorials protest too much: Their invocation of historical inevitability suggests that this very factor is no longer to be counted on.

The New York decision, *Hernandez* v. *Robles*, is an exercise in judicial restraint, but also more. To reach its decision, the New York Court of Appeals had to make certain classic judicial-restraint moves. First: affirm that the state's failure to extend marriage to same-sex couples is subject only to "rational-basis review," the most lenient standard by which the constitutionality of government actions is tested in American courts.

Second: affirm that "rational basis" means only that the legislature could conceivably have believed the law in question is a good one. Other forms of rational-basis review have been known in the past and are surfacing again. In 1905, when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a work-hours law in the widely criticized *Lochner* decision, it purported to use rational-basis review; so did the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial court in its 2003 *Goodridge* decision, which found a right to same-sex marriage in that state's 1780 "Adams Constitution." A century apart, and serving very different values, the *Lochner* and *Goodridge* decisions both applied what some commentators call "rational basis with teeth."

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The plaintiffs in *Hernandez* v. *Robles* had hoped that New York would follow the lead of Massachusetts and find "no rational reason" for denying marriage to same-sex couples. The New York court, in a plurality opinion by Judge Robert S. Smith, would have none of this. Declining to say whether they would find these same arguments persuasive if they were legislators, the New York judges noted that it is not, after all, irrational or bigoted to believe two key propositions: (1) that straight sex can lead to babies, while gay sex cannot, and therefore straight couples, even accounting for contraception, have a higher chance of becoming parents; and (2) that children are at an advantage if they grow up, not only in a stable home, but also one with both a male and a female role-model.

There is no shortage of scholarly support for those propositions (you can find examples at *www.marriage-debate.com*). But in keeping with classic rational-basis review, the New York court did not demand documentation of the obvious. Even in 2006, those propositions remain sufficiently supported by everyday observation and ancestral wisdom that they clear the (low) rational-basis threshold.

But isn't something stricter than rational-basis review required when a fundamental right is at stake? And didn't the U.S. Supreme Court hold in *Loving* v. *Virginia* in 1967 that marriage is such a right? No—at any rate, not in the sense that same-sex marriage advocates mean when they rely on *Loving*.

Loving held that statutes forbidding interracial marriage are unconstitutional. As Judge Victoria Graffeo

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points out in her concurring opinion in *Hernandez*: "The Court [in *Loving*] applied strict scrutiny review to the racial classification, finding 'no legitimate overriding purpose independent of invidious racial discrimination which justifies this classification.'"

In other words, *Loving* was about race. "Although the Court [in *Loving*] characterized the right to marry as a 'choice,'" writes Judge Graffeo, "it did not articulate the broad 'right to marry the spouse of one's choice' suggested by plaintiffs here. Rather, the Court observed that 'the Fourteenth Amendment requires that *the freedom of choice to marry not be restricted by invidious racial discriminations*.'" (The emphasis is Graffeo's.)

Judge Smith's plurality opinion points out that gays in New York are as free as straights to marry a person of the opposite sex. Immediately the chorus will arise: That's the "equal application" theory that Virginia tried to use in *Loving*! That's like saying Virginia's miscegenation law was fine because blacks and whites were equally prohibited from marrying across the racial divide! And the Court in *Loving* rejected that argument, with scorn.

But that was different, Judge Smith argues. The supposed "equal application" in the Virginia miscegenation law, he writes, was "sham equality. . . . The statute there, prohibiting black and white people from marrying each other, was in substance anti-black legislation." And the plaintiffs in New York did not argue "that the legislation they challenge is designed to subordinate either men to women or women to men as a class."

Yes, it "does confer advantages on the basis of sexual preference"—but that matters little when "rational basis" is the applicable test. In its 1996 decision in *Romer* v. *Evans*—striking down an anti-gay rights amendment to the Colorado constitution—the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hold that "strict scrutiny" was the right test. The plaintiffs won anyway, because the law they had challenged was, in the Court's view, explicable only by irrational bigotry, and was therefore unconstitutional without further ado. This doctrine led not only to *Romer*, but also to *Lawrence* v. *Texas* (striking down sodomy laws) and, in Massachusetts, *Goodridge*.

In *Hernandez*, however, the "no rational basis" juggernaut screeched to a halt. The New York court did not quarrel with *Romer* or *Lawrence*, but it held that marriage is different. Maybe Colorado's Amendment 2 was based on irrational "animus"; maybe Texas's sodomy law was too. But privileging the exclusive male-female relationship because of its role in childrearing?

Michael Ramirez

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Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, a voter initiative that would amend the state constitution to ban same-sex marriage survived scrutiny by the Massachusetts high court—they of the *Goodridge* decision. There is a state rule against initiatives that reverse the outcomes of decided cases. But changing the substantive law, the court held, is not the same as reversing a judgment rendered under the previous law. So the measure can appear on the 2008 ballot.

However, two justices, John M. Greaney and Roderick L. Ireland, pretty openly announced that they look forward to striking down the initiative *even if it becomes part of the Massachusetts constitution.* For a jurisprudential parallel, imagine Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney living on into Reconstruction and striking down the Thirteenth Amendment because it conflicts with his opinion in *Dred Scott.*

Greaney reasoned that the initiative cannot have a rational basis, because his court already decided in *Goodridge* that there is no rational basis for not allowing gay marriage. "There is," he continued, "no Massachusetts precedent discussing, or deciding, whether the initiative procedure may be used to add a constitutional provision that purposefully discriminates against an oppressed and disfavored minority of our citizens in direct contravention of the principles of liberty and equality protected by Art. 1 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights."

No "precedent discussing, or deciding," that is, whether the Massachusetts court can use one part of the Massachusetts Constitution to strike down another. No doubt there isn't: Some elements of the rule of law are too basic to need "precedent." Or at least they were before we entered the age of postmodern law, in which two Massachusetts justices can declare seriously that a rule defining marriage as one-man-one-woman would look "starkly out of place in the Adams Constitution."

John Adams might, for once, feel more at home in New York. ♦

Letting Down Japan . . .

And currying favor with China.

BY GARY SCHMITT & DAN BLUMENTHAL

ALTHOUGH U.S. POLICY toward North Korea is ostensibly about "keeping the most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous regimes," the reality is that we haven't even come close to doing that. North Korea almost certainly has nuclear weapons, and it is slowly developing the missiles to carry them. And there is no prospect that, short of a regime collapse, North Korea will give up those weapons. Why would it? Nukes give the DPRK a decisive deterrent against its enemies and, as the record from the mid-'90s to today shows, behaving badly pays dividends, with large amounts of food and cash flowing into North Korea from its former wartime opponents.

But pretending otherwise seems to be the order of the day, especially in Seoul and Foggy Bottom. As Christopher Hill, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, remarked in a *NewsHour* interview on July 5: The "issue of North Korea and its nuclear program needs a diplomatic process. We have got a very good process. The fact that we haven't gotten there with a solution, I don't think really should reflect on the process."

Leaving aside the question of what exactly Hill would like the six-party talks to "reflect" when they show no signs of succeeding, treating the talks as virtually an end in themselves has accentuated China's role in the region at the expense of our most important Pacific ally, Japan.

Now, this might make sense if we had any evidence that Beijing actually shared America's concerns about North Korea and its weapons programs. But there is little reason to believe this is the case. China has never used its substantial economic leverage over North Korea to force Pyongyang to negotiate seriously. Indeed, all the evidence suggests that China's leaders are simply interested in keeping the talks going. The very existence of the talks gives Beijing negotiating capital with Washington in other areas, such as Taiwan. More significantly, an unresolved North Korean problem dilutes America's sway in the region to China's advantage.

In the meantime, and especially in the wake of the North Korean missile launchings, this Sino-centric diplomacy is at cross purposes with sustaining good ties with Japan. Commentators have repeatedly pointed out that North Korea's test of a long-range missile failed, but they typically ignore the fact that Japan is in the range of the medium- and short-range rockets successfully tested by the DPRK on July 5.

A 1998 North Korean missile test that passed over Japan's territory persuaded Tokyo to rethink its long-standing pacifist military posture and begin, among other things, investing in ballistic missile defenses. This time around, the Japanese government took the lead in pushing for a strong U.N. Security Council resolution that would sanction North Korea for its behavior. And,

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on its own, it announced new sanctions on trade with the DPRK.

Tokyo was counting on an equally strong reaction from the White House. After all, President Bush had announced before the missile launches that conducting such tests was "unacceptable." Instead, what Tokyo got were reprimands from South Korea for stoking a crisis and egg on its face as Washington dispatched Hill to the region, not to round up support for a tougher line but to ask China to push Pyongyang back to the negotiating table.

This is not playing well in Japan, where polls show a large percentage of Japanese believe North Korea to be a real threat. Not surprisingly, leading Japanese politicians, such as Defense Minister Fukushiro Nukaga and Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, have reacted to the missile firings by suggesting that Japan look at the possibility of acquiring offensive weapons capable of preemptively striking North Korean launch sites. Such a course of action is only made more likely by the Japanese perception that the current U.S. policy is one of speaking incoherently and carrying no stick.

Nor is this a good time to be seen as a fickle ally. We have been asking Tokyo to take on more of the burden in our alliance. In turn, it has supported almost all of Washington's requests. Japan has dispatched ships to support American troops in Afghanistan, as well as troops to help with Iraq's reconstruction. The government has agreed to pay a significant portion of the costs associated with relocating American troops out of Japan. And Japan's politicians have shown real leadership in overcoming the country's pacifist past to be a more responsible ally to the United States in the region and globally.

But all of this is premised on their trust in us, and their expectation that we will mind their interests as well as our own. Following a diplomatic track that makes Japan's concerns secondary to the neverending, never-successful six-party talks is a sure way to dampen that trust. ♦

Free at Last

Montenegro declares independence.

BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Podgorica, Montenegro

"IT WAS a Balkan love feast!" said James Lyon, regional expert for the International Crisis Group, about Montenegro's independence celebration beginning on July 12. In a notoriously fractious part of the world, the festivities drew Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians, Albanians, and even some Serb politicians, as the Montenegrins breathed an enormous sigh of relief at their divorce from the Belgrade regime.

Montenegro has fewer than 700,000 people, a tormented history, and plenty of challenges. But it also has magnificent assets: beautiful mountains and beaches, and basic amity between its Slav Orthodox majority and its Muslim Slav and Albanian minorities. Both of the latter voted overwhelmingly, in a May referendum, for the country's exit from its dysfunctional marriage with Serbia, which dated back to the end of the First World War.

If anything symbolized the unhappy relationship of Montenegro with the Serbian mafia state, it was the humiliation of the last team to represent a conjoined Serbia and Montenegro in the soccer World Cup. Argentina rolled over the team like a tank, 6-0, on June 16, devastating the demoralized sportsmen from a country that had ceased to exist.

On the ground, Montenegro is prospering. New businesses are burgeoning, and the tourist trade is beginning to revive after years of stagnation caused by the fall of Titoite communism, the Balkan wars, and gross corruption. President Filip Vujanovic of the Democratic Party of Socialists has led the world's newest republic into the United Nations, which admitted Montenegro on June 28. The date was significant: the anniversary of the legendary defeat of Serbia at the battle of Kosovo in 1389—and the anniversary as well of the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian prince Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie by a Serb terrorist in Sarajevo in 1914, which touched off the First World War.

Montenegrin independence also has loud echoes in neighboring Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Kosovar Albanians joke that Serbia is like a Nokia cell phone: It keeps getting smaller and smaller. The proclamation of Montenegro's freedom means that the full political independence of Kosovo very likely cannot be prevented, notwithstanding bluster by extremist Serb politicos and noise from Vladimir Putin in Moscow, Chinese Communist bureaucrats, and other enemies of capitalism and freedom.

The main lesson to be learned from Montenegro's success in extricating itself from the Serbian swamp is that neither it nor the other success stories emerging from the former Yugoslavia—Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia—allowed their political processes to fall under the control of the "nation-building" operatives of the United Nations. Slovenia and Croatia won their liberty by their own blood, and have run their countries rather well since then, without submitting to the oppressive assistance of the global "humanitarian" bureaucrats. Macedonia underwent a short war between its Slav majority and large Albanian minority in 2000-2001, but has also managed to rebuild its economy without international meddling.

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Reuters / Stevo Vasiljevic

Fireworks in Podgorica after the independence vote in the Montenegro parliament

By contrast, Bosnia-Herzegovina remains very far from economic rehabilitation, with unemployment at a steady 40 percent; and Kosovo, which formerly exported electrical power to its neighbors, still undergoes energy and water cuts for days at a time—seven years after the liberation of the province by NATO. Kosovar independence is necessary for the territory to accumulate state debt and attract foreign investment. But it is also important psychologically, because the international caste that now makes the final decisions in Kosovo (about such matters as maintenance of the energy grid) insists that reconciliation between the Albanians, who constitute 92 percent of the population, and the Serbs, who exploited and murdered them for 87 years, must come before privatization of major enterprises.

The pattern should sound familiar. Unfortunately, the Bosnia-Kosovo model of nation-building has now been exported to Iraq, where the demands of brutal Sunni extremists, representing a minority that also formerly ruled by abuse, are considered by many foreign officials more legitimate than the needs of the Shia and Kurdish majority. Bosnians have begun to turn away from their former affection for the United States, incited by bad news from Baghdad, but Kosovar Albanians proclaim their love for Americans to any who will listen.

Bosnians and Kosovars often allege that the fate inflicted on them by the U.N. and other international bodies reflects Western European anxiety about Islam in the Balkans, but it would be more accurate to attribute the failure of nation-building to the U.N.'s prejudice against free enterprise. All the international bodies responsible for the future of Bosnia and Kosovo—the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well as the U.N.—are dominated by Russian, Scandinavian, and even British officials who evince a deep nostalgia for socialism and a profound suspicion of entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the way forward for Kosovo, Bosnia, and Montenegro is clearly marked by the enthusiasm of small business owners, hard-working peasants who own middle-sized parcels of land, and investors in new technology.

Montenegro and Macedonia have bigger problems with Serbian Christians than with Albanian or other Muslims. The Serbian Orthodox Church continues to control the properties of the Montenegrin and Macedonian Orthodox believers. Balkan Muslims express support for the autonomy of the non-Serb Orthodox, no less than for their own religious freedom. Feeble Serbian lobbyists in Washington and elsewhere try to portray Balkan Islam as jihadist, but the truth is obviously otherwise. Local Sufis, for example, express greater resentment of Saudi-backed Wahhabi infiltrators than of Serbs. The Wahhabis have duped young people into joining their death cult not only with the promise of religious education and self-improvement, but also with bribes to induce men to grow Wahhabi beards and women to cover themselves completely in the Saudi manner.

Montenegro still has its problems. A local Muslim figure noted to me that constitutional rights for the small minorities—Bosnians (13 percent of the population), Croats, and others—remain unsecured. This is a cause of anxiety for one in four Montenegrins, lest ethnic demagogy reappear.

But Montenegrin president Vujanovic will hold the new country's first general election on September 10. So far, there is every indication that new borders, a new flag (red with a black eagle resembling that of Albania), and a new, clean ballot will lift Montenegro out of the black hole into which it was dragged by Serbia, and in which Belgrade seems stuck for at least another generation. ♦

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All Talk and No Strategy

The limits of diplomacy.

BY MICHAEL RUBIN

As Israeli warplanes pounded Lebanon last week, European leaders called for diplomacy. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan dispatched a three-member team to the region to urge all parties to exercise restraint. Even President George W. Bush said, "To help calm the situation, we've got diplomats in the region." Officials ritually promote diplomacy and dialogue, but absent an overarching strategy, these are no panacea. Indeed, diplomacy for diplomacy's sake can sometimes make matters worse.

On April 9, 2000, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah declared that Israel was a "cancerous body in the region . . . [which] must be uprooted." Like Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Nasrallah added, for good measure: "Jews invented the legend of the Nazi atrocities." But rather than ostracize him, Kofi Annan became the first senior international leader to shake hands with the terror chief. His outreach did not moderate Hezbollah, but rather emboldened the group and endowed it with newfound prestige.

Within the United States, the efficacy of dialogue is a mantra among the foreign policy elite. "Diplomacy is much more than just talking to your friends. You've got to talk to people who aren't our friends, and even people you dislike," former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told the *New York Times* on May 26, shortly before the Bush administration announced its decision to engage the Islamic Republic of Iran. But just as Annan's intercession with Hezbollah made matters worse, Washington's perpetual willingness to give diplomacy a chance can backfire.

Many adversaries factor the West's preference for engagement into their strategies. In 1990, Saddam Hussein offered to negotiate a withdrawal from Kuwait, all the while consolidating his occupation. Had President George H.W. Bush heeded the advice of Colin Powell, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to accept Saddam's offer, Kuwait might still be Iraq's 19th province. As secretary of state, Powell was willing to entertain a second U.N. resolution on Iraq, which gave Baghdad, Damascus, and Tehran time to organize resistance.

Misplaced confidence in an adversary's sincerity can hamper rather than hasten solutions to international problems. Following the 1993 Oslo Accords, U.S. officials failed to calibrate their level of engagement with Palestinian chairman Yasser Arafat to his level of commitment to peace. President Bill Clinton in 1996 assigned the Central Intelligence Agency to train Palestinian security forces, but many graduates used their newfound skills to further terrorism, not to stymie it. After he graduated from a U.S.-led counterterrorism training course, Palestinian security officer Khaled Abu Nijmeh organized a series of suicide bombings and took part in the May 2002 siege of the Church of the Nativity.

More recently, Hamas responded to a State Department deal to funnel aid to Gaza with rocket barrages and the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Diplomats can say the money did not go to Hamas, but money is fungible. The time was not right; nor was the strategy. Foggy Bottom may have thought the money was a show of compassion, but instead it gave a green light to terror. And even with the benefit of hindsight, Bill Clinton falls back on the same platitudes. On July 7, he suggested striking a deal with Hamas. "I'd still talk to them if they wanted to talk," he said. Such a move would, like Annan's with Nasrallah, legitimize terror.

Poorly timed dialogue is often worse than no talk at all. Lebanon once looked like a potential Bush administration success story. On April 18, Bush welcomed Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora to the White House. "We took great joy in seeing the Cedar Revolution. We understand that the hundreds of thousands of people who took to the street to express their desire to be free required courage, and we support the desire of the people to [be] . . . truly free," Bush said.

How unfortunate, then, that during her first trip to Lebanon as secretary of state three months later, Condoleezza Rice chose to meet the pro-Syrian president Emile Lahoud, against whom the pro-democracy forces had rallied. Her aides may have counseled talk, but the timing and symbolism deflated the Cedar Revolution. Her meeting was out of place with the vision both she and the president had pledged to promote. Foggy Bottom's subsequent unwillingness to press demands that the Lebanese government disarm Hezbollah demonstrates that the price of dialogue can be high indeed.

Rice's most recent outreach to Iran was hardly timed to succeed. The Iranian leadership had heard Rep. John Murtha and Sen. John Kerry's declarations of defeat in Iraq. It felt emboldened. And it understood Rice's May 31 offer of negotiations as a sign of weakness. Less than a week later, on June 4, Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei declared, "In Iraq, you failed. . . . Why do you not

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admit that you are weak and your razor is blunt?" Engaging overconfident adversaries leads to entrenchment. That adversaries rebuff offers of concessions with more violence should not surprise.

Indeed, the Iranian leadership has a much better sense of timing than the State Department. President Ahmadinejad's statement that he would not respond until August signals that Tehran—not Washington—controls the process. The Iranian military can continue to enrich uranium while Iranian politicians talk about talk. That Ahmadinejad promised a response on August 22—corresponding to the anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad's night journey from al-Aqsa to heaven—shows a sophisticated appreciation of symbolism, and will enable Ahmadinejad to channel religious passions and rally his constituents. Had Washington demanded a response on July 20—the anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's 1988 decision to negotiate an end to the Iran-Iraq war—the advantage would be Washington's. Almost as an afterthought, Rice demanded the Islamic Republic respond by July 12. The deadline lapsed without consequence. Even as the U.N. Security Council promises to renew deliberation on punishment, Tehran knows it can count on weeks if not months of more deliberation and additional last chances.

It is not just in the Middle East that the failure to tie diplomacy to an overarching U.S. strategy backfires. As the North Korea crisis continues, the Bush administration appears ready to repeat Clinton's mistakes by rewarding Kim Jong Il's provocations with diplomatic legitimacy and material gain. Unsurprisingly, the Clintonites still urge this approach: Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told CNN on July 5 that the U.S. government should respond to North Korea's missile tests by resuming bilateral talks with Kim Jong Il. On *Meet the Press* four days later, former U.N. ambassador Bill Richardson explained the North Korean mindset: "They don't believe in compromise. They believe in their only way or the highway. Their view is that their cause is right, and they're going to wait you out." Pyongyang's desire to run down the clock demonstrates a strategic framework. Richardson's recommendation did not. "I believe the only way to deal with them—and we have shown that effectively in past dealings in the Clinton administration—is direct engagement."

Robert Gallucci, lead negotiator for the 1994 Agreed Framework, at the time billed as a major breakthrough for diplomacy, appeared on the same show and argued that striking a diplomatic deal with North Korea was more important than holding Pyongyang to it. "Nobody did that deal in '94 thinking we were

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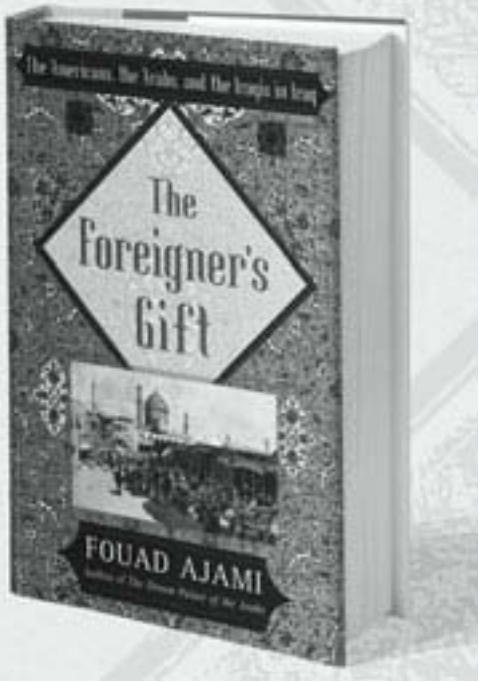

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trusting North Koreans. . . . We caught them cheating. You might make another deal." What you don't do, he argued, is let that sour you on more deal-making.

Bush appears to concur. In a July 6 press conference, he called four times for diplomacy to continue, even while acknowledging that "diplomacy takes a while, particularly when you're dealing with a variety of partners." But when winning Chinese and Russian acquiescence becomes more important than denying Kim Jong Il missiles, process has trumped outcome. That's a recipe for strategic failure.

Foggy Bottom's enthusiasm for dialogue absent strategic context has a corrosive effect on U.S. relations with its allies. Take Turkey: On June 6, Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced his desire to visit the White House. On July 5, Turkish foreign minister Abdullah Gül repeated the request in a meeting with Rice. The State Department endorsed the meeting, explaining that it's convention to grant the prime minister of any NATO ally—even one that hosts Hamas—a White House audience.

But Erdogan wants an Oval Office meeting less to engage in sincere dialogue and more to imply White House endorsement. His request came amid growing domestic difficulties. While Erdogan's Justice and Development party came to power in 2002 on an anticorruption platform, his finance minister now faces a corruption probe, Erdogan's own assets are murky, and last month Turkish officials announced a probe into money transfers from top adviser Cuneyd Zapsu to an al Qaeda financier. Turkey's currency has lost 20 percent of its value in recent weeks. Turkish talk shows speculate daily about early elections.

Two recent Turkish polls place support for the Justice and Development party at just under 30 percent. Any visit by Erdogan during an election campaign will only antagonize the remaining 70 percent of Turks who will complain of interference. Talk is fine. But only when guided by strategy.

Diplomacy is the bread-and-butter of statecraft. Richard Armitage is correct that engagement with adversaries is important. But results matter most. As the Middle East does battle, Iran pursues nuclear weapons, North Korea goes ballistic, and Arab liberalism collapses for lack of support, surely the Bush administration should come to grips with reality, rather than engage in a diplomatic fantasy in which all adversaries are flexible, and all dialogue partners sincere. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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The Rogues Strike Back

Iran, Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah vs. Israel

By Robert Satloff

Iran thumbs its nose at Western diplomats and continues nuclear enrichment. Hamas's chief, speaking from Damascus, boasts about kidnapping an Israeli soldier. Hezbollah launches a cross-border raid, prompting Israeli retaliation in Beirut and a return volley of rockets on northern Israel. Just another bleak week in the hopeless Middle East? Regrettably, no. This one was different. This was the week the Dark Side went on the offensive.

Iran, Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah: These are not marginal fringe groups. The first two are sovereign states, the third forms the elected government of the Palestinian Authority, and the fourth holds 25 of the 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament and, effectively, two ministerial portfolios. This was the week that the rogue regimes of the "Old Middle East"—as opposed to the shadowy, faceless terrorist groups of the "New Middle East"—reminded the world that they too have the potential to grab headlines and wreak havoc.

AP Photo / Bassem Tellawi

Ali Larijani, Iran's nuclear negotiator, embraces Syria's vice president Farouk al-Sharaa in Damascus, July 12.

Here's a recap: On Monday, July 10, Khaled Meshal, head of the political bureau of Hamas, held a news conference in Damascus in which he took full responsibility for the kidnapping of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, whom he called a "prisoner of war."

On Tuesday, July 11, Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, told European Union envoy Javier Solana that Tehran was in no hurry to respond to a U.S.-European offer of incentives to end its nuclear enrichment program and would not give a formal reply until late August. Larijani then flew to Damascus, where he praised Hamas for its noble resistance to Zionist occupation.

On Wednesday, July 12, militiamen belonging to the Iranian-backed Hezbollah crossed the internationally recognized Israel-Lebanon frontier and attacked an Israeli position, killing eight soldiers and capturing two. This was "an act of war," said Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, who authorized airstrikes on Beirut airport and Hezbollah facilities. Later that day, the United States and other permanent members asked the U.N. Security Council to compel Iran to suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. "We called [Iran's] bluff today," a senior State Department official told the *Los Angeles Times*.

On Thursday, July 13, Hezbollah rockets—supplied by Iran, via Syria—fell on major cities in northern Israel, including Haifa, Safed, Karmiel, and Nahariya, killing two, injuring dozens, and sending thousands to shelters. Israeli shelling shut down all civilian and military air access to Lebanon, as Israel continued bombing Hamas targets throughout Gaza, too. "All operations are legitimate to wipe out terror," said Israel's northern front commander Major General Udi Adam.

That's a lot of tough talk about war, face-offs, and showdowns, even for the Middle East, but what makes this train of events more worrisome than a typical week in the region is that these events—and their perpetrators

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—are all connected. No, this is not another Middle East conspiracy theory; to paraphrase Henry Kissinger's line about paranoids, sometimes bad guys shooting at you from all directions just might be in cahoots. In fact, the quartet of Iran, Syria, Hamas, and Hezbollah constitutes a better oiled, more cohesive unit than the diplomatic quartet of the United States, the U.N., the E.U., and Russia. Indeed, the rogue foursome is linked ideologically and operationally in a much more organic way than the charter members of the Axis of Evil ever were.

AFP / Getty Images / Yoav Lemmer

Israeli soldiers patrol the border with Lebanon, July 13.

The key, it is important to note, is not religion. Iran and Hezbollah are led by Shiite extremists; Hamas is the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, an international Sunni movement; and Syria is governed by the world's only remaining Baathist, a secular chieftan of the Alawite sect, which reviles (and is reviled by) Syria's majority Sunni community. A feverish brand of radical Islamism certainly inspires some of these actors, but what drives them together is politics.

A generation ago, before Hamas and Hezbollah ever existed, Hafez al-Assad's Syria and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran forged an alliance born of their common fear and loathing of Saddam Hussein. When the collapse of the Soviet Union deprived Syria of its superpower patron, leaving it surrounded by NATO-ally Turkey, pro-West Jordan, and the same thug in Baghdad, Assad continued to reach out to Tehran to avoid isolation. For their part, the Iranians exploited the situation, using Syria as the staging ground from which to build Hezbollah into their instrument for exporting the Islamic revolution.

In recent years, Hamas's success has been manna from heaven to the Iranians, Syrians, and Hezbollahis. Though these Palestinian Islamists fought and won their own battles against the more secular Fatah, Hamas's partners in the rogue quartet were perfectly happy to reap the benefits of a new front in their proxy war against Israel.

Today, these four—two states, one near-state, and one state-within-a-state—are collectively motivated by opportunity, not fear. The opportunity arises partly because the hated Saddam Hussein is gone, replaced by a weak, terrorist-wracked Shiite-led Iraqi government, propped up by a bleeding America. But each of these actors has its own reasons for exultation and brinkmanship.

Through Iranian eyes, the fact that the West has imposed no price for twenty years of lying about its nuclear program, but instead is still willing to offer ever-greater incentives, must seem remarkable. Only a preening sense of self-confidence can explain Iran's insouciant attitude toward the U.S.-E.U. offer. Indeed, U.S. and other Western diplomats who were dismayed at Iran's failure to respond to the package of carrots failed to recognize that Iran *did* respond, through what Clausewitz would have called diplomacy by other means: upping the ante via Hezbollah. With the threat of any meaningful U.N. sanctions months away, the Iranians took the initiative. Their goal is to make Israel just another item on the nuclear bargaining table with the West.

Through Syrian eyes, the fact that the West, operat-

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ing through the U.N., appears less likely today than at any point in the past year to impose a price on the Assad family for its role in murdering former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri must seem similarly stunning. Only a robust sense of optimism can explain Syria's brutal crackdown on secular reformers and liberal dissidents at home and its ongoing efforts to silence critics—like the courageous journalist Gibran Tueni, assassinated in December 2005—in Lebanon next door. Last week, Syria's accidental president, Assad's son Bashar, evidently looked at the rising price the West was willing to pay Iran to stop its objectionable behavior and decided he wants to get into the game. But, lacking significant oil revenues, he chose the poor man's blackmail of terrorism. Hence Syria's brazen decision to break the fiction of its nonsupport to terrorists by providing Khaled Meshal with a Damascus soapbox to boast of his terrorist deeds.

Through Hezbollah's eyes, the failure of the West to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559—which demands the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon and calls on the Lebanese government to exercise sovereignty up to the border with Israel—nicely fits its view of the Jewish state as weak, brittle, and impotent. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has likened it to a "spider web." Only an unswerving sense of ideological purpose can explain Hezbollah's willingness to ridicule its own role as a Lebanese political party serving in the Lebanese government by taking actions that rain Israeli retaliation down upon the heads of fellow Lebanese.

And through Hamas's eyes, the fact that the West, including Israel and the United States, permitted a terrorist organization committed to the destruction of the Jewish state to take over the reins of government in the Palestinian Authority—an entity whose only *raison d'être* is to be an instrument of peacemaking—is surely proof of divine intercession. Hamas's attack against the Israeli position at Kerem Shalom occurred *just before* the Europeans were set to launch a humanitarian aid program that would have dulled the impact of the U.S.-led financial quarantine on the PA, and *just after* Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas fell into the trap of endorsing a political platform, known as the Prisoners Document, that in large respects mirrored Hamas's own "solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Only a steadfast conviction in the rightness of the battle against the Zionist entity could compel Hamas leaders to forgo these advantages in exchange for the Israeli reoccupation of parts of Gaza.

Virtually overnight, an audacious Hamas raid has metastasized into a crisis that holds the greatest potential for regional conflagration in years. On a strategic level, the rogues' goal is almost surely to fuse the disparate crises into one—merging either the Hamas or Hezbollah front with Iran's nuclear standoff with the West, perhaps by the transfer of the captive soldiers to Iranian control, by direct involvement of Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the rocket fire against Israel, or by some other means.

If that happens, then Hamas and its fellow quartet members may achieve what Yasser Arafat was not able to accomplish with two intifadas—to regionalize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and thereby radically alter the strategic balance. And if Iran is able to exploit this crisis to show that its nuclear program earns it and its allies special treatment on the terrorism front, Tehran will have proven precisely how beneficial the decision to invest in a nuclear program really was. As the Iranian newspaper *Kayhan*, close to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, editorialized last Thursday, "Nuclear Iran is eradicating the nuclear prestige of Israel." That's the sort of rising star to which Syria would like to be hitched.

In Gaza and Lebanon, a battle between Israel and two of its enemies has now been joined. Its spread to two other enemies—Iran and Syria—is a stark and urgent possibility. Let us not mistake this conflict for a local skirmish, a pesky diversion from more serious business, like stopping Iran's nuclear program or building a free, stable Iraq. On the contrary, it is all of a piece.

Defeat for Israel—either on the battlefield or via coerced compromises to achieve flawed ceasefires—is a defeat for U.S. interests; it will inspire radicals of every stripe, release Iran and Syria to spread more mayhem inside Iraq, and make more likely our own eventual confrontation with this emboldened alliance of extremists. Victory—in the form of Hezbollah's disarmament, the expulsion of the Iranian military presence from Lebanon, the eviction of Meshal and friends from Damascus, and the demise of the Hamas government in Gaza—is, by the same token, also a victory for U.S. (and Western) interests.

Achieving those successes—and avoiding those setbacks—will take time, persistence, and leadership. While military force is essential, nonmilitary measures are needed too. These include organizing transatlantic consensus on economic and political pressure on Syria, devising a fast-executing international mechanism to disarm Hezbollah, and expediting the Security Council process on Iran. As enervating as it must be to an administration whose policy plate already overflows with tough problems, none of this can happen without America taking the lead. ♦

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Birth of an Army

With the Iraqi forces in Ramadi

By David Bellavia, Owen West & Wade Zirkle

Ramadi

On the fourth day of operation-no-name in Al Anbar's deadly provincial capital, Ramadi, an Iraqi infantry squad moves into a dingy alley on the eastern edge of the Mu'saab district. It's quiet. As their combat boots pick a trail along the garbage-strewn street, the crunch of glass can be heard. The operation is subdued, nameless by design. After two years and dozens of urban battles in Iraq announced with catchy titles, reverberating tank engines, and even rock music, this late-June operation is a slow squeeze. And Iraqis are leading.

American troops have heard that before, of course. Since early 2004, when defense department officials first began touting Iraqi leadership in battle, U.S. soldiers have been wondering where exactly this phantom was, sometimes bumping up against a group of insurgents and sarcastically shouting, "It's the ICDC [Iraqi Civil Defense Corps], leading from the front again!" Here in Ramadi, it's real.

Enemy mortars echo in a concrete canyon, too distant for accuracy, but plenty close for the shock waves to cause the Iraqi soldiers to hunch. The quick radio chatter that follows marks the new relationship; American Marines fighting on the flank are trading information with the Iraqis, who control their own large piece of the battlefield.

Their infantry skills aren't perfect. Iraqis carry their weapons every which way, and they enter buildings like horses out of the gate, often bumping into one another. American units drill urban movement to exhaustion; Iraqi squads may discuss it over sweet chai tea. Yet, when they search a building, they confidently rip detonation cords from under rugs and blasting caps from corners and belt-fed ammunition from hidden cupboards. Iraqis find in minutes all kinds of suspicious or incriminating items that even a polished American unit would have missed.

A junior Iraqi enlisted man, called a "Jundi," recognizes the signal to halt given by his sergeant, or "Areef." He kneels and immediately lights a cigarette. His mustache is the best indicator of his rank. The Jundies wear scraggly, almost pre-pubescent mustaches. The Areefs wear thicker ones, but not as bushy as the officers'.

It isn't your classic combat halt. Some Jundies remove their helmets to wipe their brows, and others ignore roads they should be securing. But they have the guts to look for contact. And in a Sunni city like Ramadi, where the populace is vacillating between murderous thugs on one side and the soldiers of a Baghdad government perceived as unfriendly on the other, the Iraqi army's willingness to brawl is essential to winning people to its side.

An Areef notices a young civilian ambling toward his platoon. "Why don't you join us?"

The local shakes his head, making a cutting gesture across his throat. Attrition for an Iraqi unit assigned to Anbar comes not so much via the sniper or IED as it does the relentless, deflating threat of retribution. If a face in a uniform is recognized, murder ripples through the soldier's entire social network. During a recent leave, 46 Iraqi soldiers out of 370 did not return to their unit. Half of the absent returned weeks later, but the permanent AWOLs are only replaced by constant recruitment, of the kind the Areef was doing.

"Relax. I still have my head," the sergeant jokes. He points to an American reporter accompanying him. "The Americans sew it back on that good, you don't see?"

The local laughs nervously and hustles down a street. In battle, the line between the humorous and the macabre is blurry. In the Al Anbar counterinsurgency, the line between inquisitive local and insurgent is even blurrier.

The first objective of the Ramadi "squeeze" is the Haj Dahr Mosque, whose minaret has been used to give American and Iraqi positions away under the guise of calls to prayer.

The mosque is entered and cleared by Iraqis who do not fire a single round. They're soon scrubbing floors, repairing broken windows, and filling two-week-old and two-year-old bullet scars with putty. They scrawl a mes-

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*David Bellavia, Owen West, and Wade Zirkle are infantry veterans of the Iraq war and cofounders of Vets for Freedom (*vetsforfreedom.org*). In June, Bellavia and Zirkle were embedded as journalists with the Iraqi army in Ramadi.*

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sage on a sign near the entrance: "This is a house of prayer and will be used to worship."

A reporter asks one of the soldiers, "You guys know there is a war going on, right?"

"Some things are more important than war," he says.

On the Ramadi battlefield, the American military is torn between using firepower to destroy enemy strong points and befriending the family asleep next door. The Iraqi army has problems, but the perception of cultural destroyer isn't one.

As one American Army officer stated, "If the Iraqis want to enter a mosque that they believe is harboring the enemy, they can just do it. A U.S. soldier would need the approval of a three-star general to do the same thing."

The central battles of the counterinsurgency were fought in neighboring Falluja in April 2004 and again the following November after feckless decision-making by American and Iraqi politicians resulted in the largest U.S. urban offensive in 60 years. At the time, the fledgling ICDC disintegrated. Most Iraqi soldiers refused to fight. Others working with the Americans so unnerved their partners that they were told to stay away from U.S. lines. Worse, their loyalties were questioned.

The joke at the time was that before the Americans began training Iraqis to defend their own country, fire fights with insurgents consisted of masked idiots committing "suicide-by-Marine." When the new ICDC was formed, the insurgents grew more proficient, taking better shots from covered positions. Accusations of ICDC soldiers planting IEDs while on patrol were rampant in American infantry squads. During the second battle of Falluja, many insurgents were wearing Iraqi uniforms and Kevlar protection.

If 2004 was the year of the urban rebellion, 2005 was the year of the new army. What is perhaps most remarkable about the Iraqi army is that, crafted by the firm hand of General David Petraeus, it was formed in a vacuum of central governmental authority—yet it is now making slow but steady headway in the most difficult Sunni-controlled real estate.

In Ramadi, where the tip of the spear has been occupied by U.S. soldiers or Marines at heavy cost since 2003, Iraqis of the 1st Iraqi Division's 1st Brigade are the lead. The units are advised by U.S. Military Transition Teams (MiTTs). The model is simple: The Iraqi soldier-to-U.S.-adviser ratio is roughly ten to one, and teams embed with Iraqis at the squad level all the way up through the Ministry of Defense. There are almost 4,000 total MiTT soldiers deployed in more than 200 units in Iraq.

"The Iraqi army will never be the American Army, but they don't need to be better than us. They just need to be able to get the job done," says Lieutenant Colonel Mark Simpson from Manassas, Virginia, a senior MiTT adviser to the 1st Brigade. "Not our way, but their way." This is a refrain echoed in one form or another by MiTT commanders across Iraq: The Iraqi army won't do it exactly the way we want them to, but they "get it."

The concept of training friendly forces to fight their "own" wars is a tactic that has been over-debated in the free thinking seminar halls of war colleges and think tanks for generations but under-taught in traditional military education by officers stung in Vietnam. Now, experience in Iraq is suggesting circumstances under which an American adviser program can succeed. The MiTT program was created *after* coalition armies had occupied the country. Friendly forces are close, and the support structure is robust. Second, Iraqi soldiers have shown remarkable resiliency in the face of continued losses; Iraqi security forces have suffered twice the number of casualties as their American counterparts, yet their ranks and capabilities are steadily swelling.

"The bottom line is that they can operate. They can receive missions, plan, and execute them independently and effectively," says Marine Lieutenant Colonel Kris Stillings, who commands a Military Transition Team in the 7th Iraqi Division in western Ramadi. "This is the light at the end of the tunnel."

Unfortunately, no one knows how long the tunnel is. Before the Iraqi army emerges, two problems need to be addressed. First, the Iraqi army has no code of military justice. No matter how well advised, the Iraqi army will falter through indiscipline if there is no governing body and deserters go unpunished. This structural problem is compounded in Sunni areas, where the Iraqi army is seen as an instrument of Shia control.

Second, soldiers cannot occupy cities in perpetuity. Eventually police must step in to patrol the neighborhoods in which they sleep. This is an enormous challenge in Anbar. In Ramadi, there is no police force.

A subtler problem is that Iraqi soldiers, while brave, patrol with an underlying belief that life is predetermined. Divine intervention has its place, but fatalism on the battlefield often inflates casualties.

The Iraqi army's 1st Division, 1st Brigade commander, General Razaq, wears a thick mustache, an immaculate uniform, and perfectly trimmed hair when he agrees to meet with a reporter. Because of the insurgency's penchant for killing the families of government officials, senior civil servants often use a single tribal name—which means that the Iraqi army has more one-

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named leaders than the Brazilian national soccer team.

Like his American peers, Razaq is disdainful of the press corps. Both the Arab and American media have given him headaches. Every few minutes, he offers the reporter a cold or hot beverage, a cigarette, or a candy mint. The offers serve as a buffer to questions, an effective technique that eventually causes the general's fellow officers to snicker out loud. Five cigarettes smolder near the general, each one with an inch of ash, a clue that he has no time for concentrated smoking but is affluent enough to start multiple cigarettes.

Razaq is a Sunni married to a Shiite. Because of his occupation, he has buried two uncles, a brother, a sister-in-law, and dozens of cousins. His unit has fought in every offensive since 2004. The 1st Iraqi Division is the oldest of the new Iraqi army, and it has shared battle space with Americans in places like Sadr City, Falluja, Mosul, Najaf, Karbala, Habbaniyah, Tal Afar, Hit, Khyme, and now Ramadi.

"Every day the enemy is getting weaker and weaker. They cannot win. Because the good in Iraq will not let them. I will not let them," he says with a stern face.

Razaq understands counterinsurgency. As a recent firefight dwindled, the rumble of approaching engines filled the streets. Soldiers smiled, sure that American vehicles were coming to reinforce. Instead, a fleet of garbage trucks arrived. Razaq was cleaning the dirty streets he had just secured, and the locals noticed.

This is not to say he shies from the stick. "If they shoot one bullet," he says, "we will shoot many more." While the Americans struggled with force escalation, the Iraqis we observed had fewer reservations.

Back on the street, Ramadi is enormously confused. True to General Razaq's assertion, the citizens clearly welcome the security force and its umbrella of protection. But Ramadi is a city under siege, not from outside but from a hard core of insurgents lodged within. When the Iraqi army is not there, says a soldier, the citizens allow the insurgents to do as they please. A year of unopposed intimidation has worked to the benefit of a fanatical opponent of the very security they covet. The question is, as the Iraqi forces encounter fiercer resistance, will the squeeze continue or will it fade?

A sniper's bullet cracks. American troops working with the Iraqis begin shouting frantically. In the distance a Marine falls, mortally wounded. The announcement is an immediate emotional ratchet. The main threats in Ramadi are the sniper and the IED. Gone are the days when roving gangs of thugs had the assurance to ambush American patrols. Though demoralizing, the loss of soldiers to snipers or IEDs indicates a hit-and-run insurgency, rather than a city that will die fighting.

Whether it be from ignorance or upbringing, the Iraqi reaction is unemotional. A man falls to a sniper, and his comrades mutter, "*Inshallah*"—it is God's will. When they eventually begin to patrol again, there is a strange sense of calm. A hardened U.S. Navy SEAL team approaches, their faces covered in sweat. The Iraqis greet them as equals; they don't know a SEAL from an Eagle Scout. To them, all soldiers are the same. This is part of the charm of the Iraqi army. They live and fight in absolutes. Civilians are good. Insurgents are bad. Civilians can never be insurgents: If something seems funny about a man, he's not a civilian, and he will be punished.

It's difficult to rate their profiling ability. Like Americans, these soldiers are strangers to Anbar. Given their upbringing in a brutal dictatorship and the lack of a rigorous military code of discipline, Iraqi soldiers tend toward swift, harsh judgment.

What is undeniable is that the MiTT-led Iraqis understand the tribal heritage and leadership structure of the areas they patrol. They have an instantaneous grasp of the different elements of the population and the nuances of the culture. What their American peers might not master in years of study, they incorporate automatically.

In all these ways, the Iraqi army has steadily gained in proficiency to the point where their bond with American soldiers is undeniable. Says First Sergeant Victor Lopez of Alexandria, Virginia, who runs the MiTT supply for the 1st Brigade, "It's like sometimes you don't notice your kids are changing when you are around them all the time. You tend to focus on the things they aren't good at and when you get away from them . . . only then do you see how far they've come."

A forklift interrupts the silence of a slow morning. Americans from the 101st Airborne living in far better quarters are low on water and have come to "borrow" four pallets of bottled water from the Iraqis. The Iraqi supply sergeant and executive officer of the brigade are upset, and complain to Major Timothy Powers, an American adviser.

"They need water. They give to us, we give to them," Powers says, referring to Americans as "them."

There's tension until General Razaq hears about the exchange. He laughs out loud. "So now we are supplying the Americans? How long before they will be able to support themselves?"

Everyone laughs uproariously, a vision of the promised future that seems at once both distant and attainable. ♦

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Time Life Pictures / Getty Images

Before the Senate Judiciary Committee, February 1957

Say it ain't so, Joe

Senator McCarthy, wrong and right

BY HARVEY KLEHR

After several decades as the poster boy for American villainy, Joseph McCarthy has once again become a subject of controversy.

For years after censure by his Senate colleagues in 1954, McCarthy's legacy was defined by the name he gave to an era and to a political tactic. To accuse someone of McCarthyism is to suggest that he has made reckless, baseless accusations, smeared an opponent, or violated the norms of civilized political combat.

Hardly anyone outside the ranks of paranoid anti-Communists has had a kind word to say for the onetime Republican senator from Wisconsin.

Shooting Star
The Brief Arc of Joe McCarthy
by Tom Wicker
Harcourt, 224 pp., $22

George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck* is a recent expression of the prevailing sentiment: Only the bravery and honesty of such media titans as Edward R. Murrow enabled America to avoid the creeping fascism he represented. Among such left-wing academics as Ellen Schrecker, McCarthyism remains a handy symbol of America's predilection to meet dissent with repression.

Beginning in the 1990s, however, Russian and American archives began to disgorge startling new information about the extent of Soviet espionage directed against the United States and the key role in that activity played by the American Communist party. Suddenly, McCarthy had some unlikely defenders. The left-wing journalist Nicholas von Hoffman considered the possibility that he had been more right than wrong about subversion. Since 1999 Arthur Herman has written a sympathetic biography and Ann Coulter launched a full-throated defense of McCarthy while denouncing his liberal critics as traitors. The new evidence does not require that Joe McCarthy be rehabilitated, but it has forced even those who continue to

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regard him as a demagogue to rethink why he became such a force in American life.

Tom Wicker, the former reporter and columnist for the *New York Times*, has written a modest and limited account of the junior senator from Wisconsin. *Shooting Star* is not based on original research and mines no new archival evidence. Short and impressionistic, marred by occasional errors of fact and ignorance of recent scholarship, it nevertheless offers a plausible and sensible interpretation of the life and influence of the man Wicker believes to have been, arguably, "the most destructive demagogue in American history."

For all the hysteria he generated, McCarthy had a very brief time in the limelight. Barely known before a speech to a Lincoln Day gathering in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1950, he returned to obscurity less, than five years later after his colleagues censured him. But he made quite an impression in that brief period, accusing scores of government employees of Communist sympathies and hurling charges and smears at everyone from Adlai Stevenson to General George Marshall. While he was never without fierce critics, he successfully ignored or shook off evidence that his aim was frequently wild and his targets either badly chosen or not guilty of what he claimed about them.

When McCarthy made his famous speech, he was as unimportant as a freshman senator could be. How and why did he become a household name? Wicker notes that Joe McCarthy did not invent anticommunism, nor was the Wheeling speech his first use of it. He had accused his Democratic opponent in 1946 of Communist sympathies and he had denounced the *Madison Capital Times* for channeling the *Daily Worker*. Nor was he the first to use the Communist issue. Other Republicans had been tarring the Roosevelt and Truman administrations with charges of having turned a blind eye to subversion for several years. Why, then, did McCarthy's charge that the State Department had been harboring more than 200 card-carrying Communists resonate so strongly?

Wicker suggests, quite plausibly, that McCarthy was simply more reckless than most of his anti-Communist counterparts, going beyond insinuations of Communist sympathies or suggestions that a handful of employees were suspect. He claimed to have documentary proof for his charges that subversion was widespread. He did not. He based his charge on an outdated list of people about whom there were security questions and went well beyond that document to argue that his cases were genuine party members. When he first went after the China scholar Owen Lattimore, he made him out to be the top Communist spy in the government, and Alger Hiss's boss, even though he had not a shred of evidence to support such a charge. Undaunted, he flayed Lattimore for other alleged sins, some of which had just as little evidentiary support.

Ever since his college days at Marquette, McCarthy had been a successful poker player with a penchant for reckless betting and wild bluffs. He first ran for district attorney after only one year as a lawyer. After enlisting in the Marines during World War II, he maneuvered a shipboard accident into a Purple Heart, and a handful of rides on an airplane in combat situations into an undeserved Distinguished Flying Cross. Although he'd spent most of his time in the South Pacific as a ground intelligence officer, he reveled in the self-chosen nickname: "Tailgunner Joe."

His 1946 election was also truly audacious. Abandoning the Democratic party in 1944, he first ran in a primary against an incumbent Republican senator while on leave from the Marines. Two years later he took on one of the icons of Wisconsin politics, Senator Robert LaFollette Jr. McCarthy was the beneficiary of LaFollette's decision to merge his Progressive party into the Republican party and the ensuing resentment felt towards him by longtime conservatives. LaFollette barely campaigned and, damaged by internal party feuding, lost the primary by 5,000 votes. After overwhelming the hapless Democratic candidate, Joe McCarthy, whose only previous elected office was as a county judge, entered the United States Senate.

McCarthy's disdain for the rules and courtesies of the Senate infuriated his colleagues, both Republican and Democratic. He was rude, insulting, and boorish. His perverse defense of SS troops convicted of massacring American prisoners of war in Belgium presaged his later attack on the U.S. Army, and was hardly an issue likely to endear him to many Americans. Media observers rated him one of the worst senators. But after the Wheeling speech, Joe McCarthy was a household name.

Recklessness alone hardly accounted for the reaction he generated. McCarthy himself was surprised and flustered by the attention that suddenly came his way. Wicker notes that, in the previous two years, the top leadership of the American Communist party had been convicted of conspiring to teach and advocate the overthrow of the government by force and violence, and the Soviet Union had exploded an atomic bomb, ending America's nuclear monopoly. Two months before the Wheeling speech, Mao Zedong's Communists had seized power in China. One month before, Alger Hiss had been convicted of perjury for denying turning State Department material over to a Communist spy ring. Early in February 1950 Klaus Fuchs confessed to giving the Soviet Union atomic bomb secrets from Los Alamos.

That trusted government employees could be spies was not some theoretical possibility. Few Americans were willing to tolerate Communist sympathizers working in the federal government. Substantial numbers worried that a Democratic administration was loath to ferret out more embarrassing details about how much subversion had taken place during its long control of the executive branch.

Had the Democrats reacted differently, McCarthy might not have gotten as much traction as he did. The weakest portion of Wicker's analysis is his account of the Tydings Committee, the

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Senate body set up to investigate the charges. Its goal was to discredit McCarthy and protect the Truman administration, not uncover the truth about Soviet espionage. While many of McCarthy's specific charges could be debunked—most notably his absurd claim, soon recanted, that Lattimore was a top Soviet spy—the Tydings Committee ignored evidence of Lattimore's pro-Soviet views and refused to confront evidence that high officials in the Justice and State Departments had conspired to cover up espionage in a case dating from 1945, which Wicker ignores.

While the Tydings Committee dismissed allegations that State Department officers had worked to undermine American opposition to the Chinese Communists, American troops were soon in battle with Communist forces in Korea.

Wicker debunks some of the more alarmist claims about McCarthy. Despite the damage he did, he never created a reign of terror and his influence, while not negligible, has been overestimated. From the moment he became prominent, famous and powerful figures in politics, the press, and the intellectual world launched attacks on him. Wicker notes that, although he has been credited with bringing down several Democratic incumbents who criticized him—including Millard Tydings of Maryland and two Democratic majority leaders, Scott Lucas of Illinois and Ernest McFarland of Arizona—such claims are overstated. Many of the people he endorsed actually ran *behind* other Republicans in their states. His influence was already beginning to wane by the time Murrow went after him.

McCarthy began to dig his own grave by attacking the executive branch now controlled by the Republican party. The very recklessness that had enabled him to gain everyone's attention led him to antagonize Dwight Eisenhower, to ignore warnings from J. Edgar Hoover that he needed to get his facts right, and to unleash his aides Roy Cohn and David Schine on a jaunt through USIA libraries in Europe that turned into a public relations disaster.

The immediate cause for his downfall was his bullying performance during the Army-McCarthy hearings, the first congressional inquiry to be widely carried on live television. Cohn and McCarthy had pressured the Army to give special privileges, including an officer's commission, to Schine after he was drafted. Infuriated when he faced resistance from Army brass and the Pentagon, McCarthy made a cause out of discovering who had promoted a dentist, Captain Irving Peress, to the rank of major despite his connections to the Communist party. When Brigadier General Ralph Zwicker, a decorated veteran of the Normandy landings, displeased him, McCarthy unleashed a broadside, calling him a disgrace to the uniform he wore.

Not even Roy Cohn could control his boss, who was increasingly prone to heavy drinking. McCarthy breached a private agreement with the Army's counsel, Joseph Welch, that Cohn's avoidance of the draft would not become an issue during the hearings, and neither would the brief membership of a junior attorney in Welch's law firm in a Communist front group years before. Infuriated when Welch was baiting Cohn during a cross-examination, McCarthy mentioned the attorney and his affiliation, ignoring Cohn's frantic efforts to stop him.

That prompted Welch to deliver his famous line, "Have you left no sense of decency, sir, at long last?"

Within weeks after the conclusion of the Army-McCarthy hearings, the Senate began to consider a resolution to censure McCarthy, setting up a select committee to consider charges, and finally recommending that he be cited for contempt towards a previous Senate committee, and for his treatment of Zwicker. Advised by sympathetic colleagues to apologize, McCarthy remained defiant, claiming that the select committee was doing the work of the Communist party. The Senate dropped the Zwicker charge, but added one of calumning the select committee. In early December 1954, the Senate censured him 67-22, with 22 Republicans joining the Democrats (John F. Kennedy didn't vote) to effectively end his career.

Eisenhower quipped that McCarthyism had been transformed into McCarthywasm. He died from complications of alcoholism three years later.

While Wicker's account is generally persuasive, he occasionally overreaches. For example, McCarthy did not ruin J. Robert Oppenheimer, whose travails were unrelated to the Wisconsin senator. Wicker sometimes exaggerates, claiming that McCarthy "never uncovered—much less sent to jail—a single Communist." In fact, McCarthy identified a handful of people who were Communists, and even one or two whom we now know were minor Soviet agents.

Wicker acknowledges that there had been substantial subversion, but insists that other anti-Communists, ranging from government prosecutors to congressional investigators to such truth-tellers as Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers, had exposed most of them. What Wicker fails to understand is that McCarthy was able to feed on the widespread skepticism that many liberals displayed towards Bentley and Chambers, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, and the guilt of Alger Hiss. That does not excuse his demagoguery, but helps explain why it struck such a chord.

McCarthy's charges resonated because there had been subversion, and the government response to it had been tepid. In fact, the Venona revelations have demonstrated that spying was far more extensive than anyone at the time was willing to admit. Most of the spies had been removed from their jobs by the time McCarthy launched his crusade, but many Americans sensed that the problem had been far worse than the government had let on. And they were right.

McCarthy may have gotten most of the details wrong—and that was no minor matter—but he was correct to argue that Communist subversion had been a significant problem. ♦

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Accidental Novel

The Anne Tyler formula is showing its age.

BY SUSIE CURRIE

You don't usually put down an Anne Tyler book wishing you'd known the characters better. By the time the prolific Baltimore author is through, we know most of her cast better than our own family members. We're familiar with their quirks, we've been to their favorite restaurants, we know why they married each other and what they think of their children. Sometimes, even houses become characters (e.g., the plaster-shedding Open Arms reception site-cum-domicile in *Back When We Were Grownups*). But in *Digging to America* we gain only a passing acquaintance with at least half of the central players.

Knopf / Diana Walker

Digging to America
by Anne Tyler
Knopf, 288 pp., $24.95

Tyler's seventeenth novel opens promisingly enough, at the Baltimore airport with the arrival of two infant girls from Korea. Jin-Ho goes to Bitsy and Brad Donaldson, a graying, gregarious couple surrounded by a gaggle of well-wishing relations bearing balloons, a stroller, even a bassinet, not to mention cameras of every capability. The entourage sport large buttons identifying them by relationship to the new arrival. The other infant, Sooki, goes to the much younger Sami and Ziba Yazdan, who joyfully collect her without so much as a cell-phone snapshot while Sami's elegant Iranian mother, Maryam, looks on.

Susie Currie is a writer in Maryland.

Aspiring supermom Bitsy looks up the Yazdans within weeks to compare notes, and soon the couples are fast friends. Meanwhile, Sooki's Iranian-American parents have renamed her Susan, while Jin-Ho's apologetically American parents not only keep her name but also read her Korean folktales and dress her in elaborate native outfits. The families become interwoven through annual Arrival Day parties—Bitsy's idea—that commemorate the day the girls came to Baltimore. (A much bigger deal at the Donaldsons, notes Sami in one of his wry takes on Those Zany Americans, than Jin-Ho's birthday.)

This is the first of Anne Tyler's novels to feature foreign-born characters, and she proves as adept at getting into Iranian heads as American ones. (This is helped along, surely, by Tyler's longtime marriage to an Iranian-born child psychiatrist, who died in 1997.) She deftly depicts the multi-layered world of Iranian immigrants, where relationships hinge on, among other things, when one came to America and what one did in the old country. The trip through the various cultural accoutrements and thought processes is an engaging one.

The author has lost none of her way with imagery. Ziba's mother's cheek is "as soft as an old velvet purse." Her father's "parchment-colored head resembled an antique globe." And she handles toddler patois as deftly as Farsi. "I am not outgrown my binky," Jin Ho's younger sister firmly explains to their mother, who is planning an elaborate binky balloon launch that not even Hurricane Isabel will stop.

Still, some of Tyler's trademarks wear a bit thin this time around. She loves throwing mismatched couples together, and this one features the most peculiar pairing since *The Accidental Tourist*'s Muriel and Macon, or Michael and Pauline from *The Amateur Marriage*. In those books, painstaking illumination of the characters helped explain the attraction, but at the end of *America* you're left wondering: What does she *see* in him?

For that matter, what does young, stylish interior decorator Ziba see in crunchy, overweening Bitsy who, even though they became mothers at the same instant, dispenses heavy-handed parenting advice to her friend as freely as party invitations? The husbands have even less in common, but the one scene that depicts friction between them is puzzling and resolves nothing. One gets the feeling that, in real life, the younger pair would let the friendship lapse early on, rather than buying a house near the older one. Also, if Bitsy's so social, why doesn't she seem to have any other friends? Even Maryam, who lives in self-imposed semi-exile, has three.

Of her in-laws, Bitsy's philosophy is "the less said about them, the better." Unfortunately, that seems to be Tyler's approach to drawing Brad Donaldson and both Sami and Ziba Yazdan. Brad never comes out of his wife's shadow, and the tantalizing glimpses into the younger couple's world are few and far between. This may especially frustrate longtime readers used to Tyler's lavishly described characters, or at least to seeing more of them than populate *Digging to America*.

Once, decades ago, when Tyler was still granting face-to-face interviews, she said of her characters, "I build a house for them and then I move on to the next house." In this case the house could have used a short list of improvements. ♦

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Thirst for Knowledge

How Coca-Cola saved civilization, or something.

BY JOE QUEENAN

Walker & Company

Romans at play

The reading public has developed an insatiable appetite for books that explain the world in terms the reading public hadn't thought of before.

A History of the World in Six Glasses
by Tom Standage
Walker, 240 pp., $25

The Irish saved civilization. Or was it the Arabs? History makes no sense unless observed through the prism of rats and lice. Or was it germs, guns, and steel? Everything that ever happened was caused by the popularity of the humble olive. Or the popularity of soccer, salt, or coal. Or the onslaught of the demure cod. Or the discovery of the pencil. Nor should we overlook the decisive influence of the Iroquois on the American constitution. And while there has not yet been a concerted effort to address Merv Griffin's massive effect on the rotation of the planets, or the role played by the cantaloupe in the evolution of string theory, books of this ilk are surely on their way.

The latest attempt to explain the world in exotic terms is Tom Standage's highly entertaining *A History of the World in Six Glasses*. Standage, technology editor at *The Economist* and author of *The Victoria Internet*, believes that the world we inhabit is unfathomable unless we come to grips with the enormous role played by six beverages—beer, wine, coffee, tea, distilled spirits, and Coca-Cola—in shaping society. For the life of me, I have no idea how milk—and particularly double *mocha lattes*—got left out. I also wish the author had devoted a bit more space to the pivotal role played by lemonade, flavored malts, Gatorade, mango lassis, and Sterno in the gyrations of the 19th-century Prussian municipal bond market.

Like all practitioners of this flourishing genre, Standage overplays his hand. He is correct in identifying Coca-Cola as a distinctively American product intimately associated with capitalism, and thus the object of hatred in some parts of the world. But the same could be said about Microsoft, McDonald's, General Motors, Intel, and Billy Joel. He believes one cannot understand how the British conquered the world without examining the definitive role of tea, but the British conquered the world because of sea power, not tea power. He correctly observes that rich people throughout history have traditionally drunk better wines than poor people, but the same could be said about haberdashery, cuisine, and Rolling Stones tickets.

Standage wants us to look at the world in a way we never have looked at it before, but the main reason we have not done so is because there are better, more intelligent, ways to look at it. The rise of coffee changed the world arithmetically by altering people's habits; the rise of Christianity changed the world geometrically by altering the human psyche.

Standage's overzealous sales pitch aside, *A History of the World in Six Glasses* is a thoroughly entertaining, nicely written book filled with snappy

Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of Queenan Country: A Reluctant Anglophile's Pilgrimage to the Mother Country.

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little anecdotes and amusing asides. The Visigoths so valued the festive and hygienic quality of wine that they drew up "specific, detailed punishments for anyone who damaged a vineyard," much as frat boys would pummel senseless anyone who mis-tapped a keg of Budweiser. When George Washington ran for the House of Burgesses in 1758, "his campaign team handed out 28 gallons of rum, 50 gallons of rum punch, 34 of wine, 46 of beer, and two of cider—in a county with only 391 votes." If Al Gore had done the same thing in Florida, he might be the one who got blamed for Katrina.

Two years ago, Franklin Foer wrote a swell little book entitled *How Soccer Explains the World*. The book did not, in fact, reveal how soccer explained the world, anymore than hatchbacks, woolen mittens, or brick-oven pizza would; but Foer's fascinating stories about Serb match-riggers, Scottish thugs, and African players marooned in the wilds of the Ukraine made reading the book well worth the effort. The same can be said of Standage's thin volume. Whether one accepts its varied premises—the 18th-century London coffeehouse is the forerunner of the Internet, rum industry intrigue led directly to the American Revolution, farming came into being in ancient Mesopotamia because the locals wanted to ensure a steady supply of beer—it is precisely these oddities that make the book so delightful.

According to Standage, the ancient pyramids were built not by oppressed slaves, but tanked-up state employees, some of whom referred to themselves as the "Drunkards of Menkaure." This proves that the drone-like activities of hungover federal employees are hardly a modern innovation. He reports that Arab moonshiners flourished in medieval Spain despite the official Muslim ban on spirits: *The Dukes of Halal*, if you will. Demonstrating utter indifference to the etiquette of political correctness, Standage insists that American Indians had no interest in drinking unless there was enough booze to get everyone plastered, and that when supplies ran short, warriors were known to abstain from fire water entirely, leaving enough for their chums to get totally plowed. Presumably, the eve of the Little Big Horn was one of the rare gatherings where everyone remained firmly on the wagon.

Standage claims that the French Revolution officially erupted in a coffeehouse, which strongly suggests that if and when sedition comes to America, it could break out in a Starbucks, conceivably incited by brassy, left-leaning baristas. Finally, he reports that in 1911, in a federal case entitled *The United States* v. *Forty Barrels and Twenty Kegs of Coca-Cola*, "religious fundamentalists railed against the evils of Coca-Cola, blaming its caffeine content for promoting sexual transgressions." It is bewildering and disappointing that, during the recent Supreme Court confirmation hearings, neither Patrick Leahy nor Charles Schumer took the opportunity to ask John Roberts and Samuel Alito what they thought of *that* case.

It is equally worrisome that the federal government has never taken the brewing industry to court for perniciously attempting to pass off lite beer as an alcoholic beverage. One can only hope that, in the paperback edition, Standage will pinpoint the introduction of this vile concoction as the watershed moment when America's reputation as a two-fisted, beer-guzzling nation began to decline. More likely, though, his publishers will encourage him to write *The Gifts of the Neanderthals*, *How the Jutes Saved Northern Italian Cuisine*, or *Cuneiforms: The Sumerian Information Highway.* ♦

Modern Dancer

The world according to Tharp.

BY JUDITH GELERNTER

Twyla Tharp's ballet *How Near Heaven*, set to the music of Benjamin Britten, was danced in 1995 by one of the nation's premier companies, American Ballet Theater. The ballet's name comes from an Emily Dickinson letter of the same title. Marcia Siegel's addition of "howling" to the title reveals the sometimes-grudging manner that the choreographer's career is presented in this nonetheless significant book of dance criticism.

Howling Near Heaven
Twyla Tharp and the Reinvention of Modern Dance
by Marcia B. Siegel
St. Martin's, 336 pp., $25.95

Its significance stems primarily from the importance of the choreographer to the art world, and the insights of the author. There is no comparable monograph describing this career. An account by Tharp herself discusses major projects but offers little analysis. Many of the primary sources describing her career are available for inspection by permission only, such as material from Ohio State University. Only a few ballets, including *Push Comes to Shove*, have been televised, and a few have appeared in commercially released movies such as *Amadeus*, *White Nights*, and *Hair*.

A notable contribution of this author is her analysis of individual ballets and her attention to the development of the Tharp style. Works devoted to the evolution of style are common in art historical scholarship and musicology, but in dance history they are rare. Perhaps this is due to practical considerations, where decades of video

Judith Gelernter, who teaches in the library and information science program at Rutgers, writes frequently about dance.

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footage required for stylistic chronologies are rarely extant. Those dance scholars who have seen a great many performances tend to be critics who write for newspapers or journals. Siegel is a critic who has turned her talent to book.

Her text opens with Tharp's first concerts in Manhattan's Judson Memorial Church, and describes her works and performances to the present. She supplies background on the gestation and content of most ballets, with comments from Tharp dancers or coworkers, as well as from critics. Scholarly footnotes are swept into endnotes, so as not to distract casual readers. A chapter might cover one year or five, and some chapters consider different aspects of the same year with chronological overlap. Even so, the effect is balanced and shows a vibrant career in progress.

Anyone who reads Siegel's criticism, and then has an opportunity to see a Tharp ballet, will no doubt enjoy the ballet more. Beauty in a ballet may be obvious; originality and wit, not so obvious. Consider *Push Comes to Shove*. It's choreography plays on what a ballet "ought" to be. The few times I've viewed it on television with my family, I notice that I am the only one who laughs. The reason, I think, is that one must be intimately acquainted with standard ballet forms in order to recognize Tharp's comic aberrations. I found it almost a relief to read Siegel's clear analysis of Baryshnikov's solo:

> At first glance his solo seemed merely a string of alternating ballet steps and pedestrian movements, taken at maximum speed. He launched into ballet flash[iness]—multiple pirouettes, leaps, fancy leg designs and foot changes—interrupting this offhand virtuosity to rake his fingers through his hair or sink into one hip as if waiting for a bus. But in a sense, the street gestures are the least surprising thing about what he did. It's as if Tharp planted [the street gestures] there in order to establish an antithesis to the ballet steps, but what's in between is most interesting. Some part of each step is done in standard form, but the dancer's preparation, attack, and alignment reshapes it.

Corbis / Robbie Jack

Twyla Tharp aloft in 'Yemaya' (1998)

Siegel explains the juxtaposition of the steps in standard ballet vocabulary, and how Tharp's attacks and alignments create the unexpected and the comic.

The core of this choreographer's talent is, perhaps, her intellectualizing of the creative process. Each time, she starts with some initial idea or problem that inspires the structure. This idea is no secret, and she has given lecture-demonstrations to explain the concept behind the work. The concept gives the ballet an intrinsic logic and a structure independent of the music. That is why a work might be created to one score and performed to another. In her second book, *The Creative Habit* (2003), Tharp shares her method with those in any field who must produce something from nothing.

Thinker, writer, athlete, artist—who is Twyla Tharp? Siegel's purpose is to delve into the ballets and not their creator's character. In this she succeeds admirably. Occasionally, she slips in character traits, such as this passage about a woman who has "the talent, the ego, and determination to make an individual style. . . . At once a rebel and a puritan." Yet adjective strings run shallow, and a truer picture comes from how Tharp has reacted to people

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and events, as may be gleaned from Siegel's narrative.

The respect between Tharp and her dancers overturns accusations of egoism. The choreographer, even in her early twenties, led a group of dancers of the same age. Some musical ensembles work in a similar way—one writing works that all perform together—but dancers don't read from a score. Teaching parts to dancers requires the human factors of rapport, respect, and a degree of distance. Whatever it takes, Tharp seems to have gotten it right, and the evidence in most cases has been strong loyalty between her and her dancers.

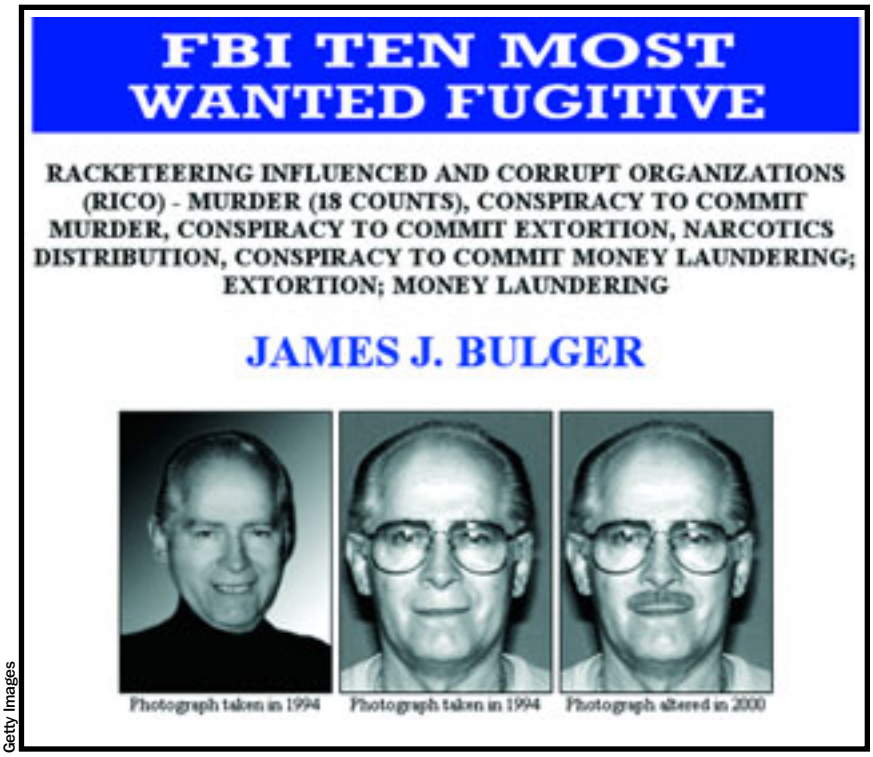
Nor is she egoistic about her choreography. She gives her dancers the artistic freedom to adapt her moves to their bodies: "Tharp was offering her dancers a challenge and an opportunity. For her that meant offering them love," writes Siegel. She has also been responsible financially. In 1972 she won an award for younger artists. In a public show of respect, she divided the thousand-dollar prize into two checks, and gave them to her two dancers during the award ceremony. More important, she tries to pay dancers what they deserve, and endures a busy touring schedule, even though it cuts into her creative time.

Why do such character strengths seem buried in Siegel's narrative? Why were unattractive photographs selected for the cover portrait and back cover shots, and within its plates, when the choreographer is, in fact, beautiful? Sadly, omission of the personal good and emphasis on the bad is a pattern in this book. Recall the title, *Howling*. Notice, too, that it is dedicated to two Tharp dancers and "all the others who made Tharp dance"—as if Tharp's own talents would have been diminished without these brilliant dancers. More subtle is the repeated pattern in which a paragraph describes some accomplishment but saves for the last sentence a verbal sting. Those acquainted with Tharp will find the author's biases achingly apparent. The pity is that those unacquainted with Tharp may not recognize them. ♦

The Anti-Brahmins

Not every Massachusetts dynasty is great.

BY EDWARD ACHORN



Getty Images

In Massachusetts, politics and crime go together like baked beans and molasses. But even by the standards of Bay State cuisine, the Bulger brothers—Billy and Whitey, each working his own side of the kitchen—achieved extraordinary success in corrupting Boston, the state, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. And therein lies a sordid tale.

The Brothers Bulger
How They Terrorized and Corrupted Boston for a Quarter Century
by Howie Carr
Warner, 352 pp., $25.95

Howie Carr, a bad-boy talk radio host and columnist for the *Boston Herald*, tells it with verve and blunt humor, if not scholarly finesse, in *The Brothers Bulger*. And with its garish cover, gum-snapping prose, laid-back editing, and absence of footnotes, the book has the tone of a paperback mobster novel to be enjoyed alongside frying bodies on a sun-baked beach.

Most of it seems to be a patch job from previous reporting (by Carr and others). But it is fun to read. And Carr performs a genuine public service in gathering and revealing what he knows about the brothers Bulger. Some of the evidence is circumstantial, and the author obviously intends to cast his subjects in the worst possible light. Still, the facts he piles up high suggest the Bulgers richly deserve the scorn and contempt most readers will feel.

Who are the Bulger (the "g" is pro-

Edward Achorn is deputy editor of the editorial pages at the Providence Journal.

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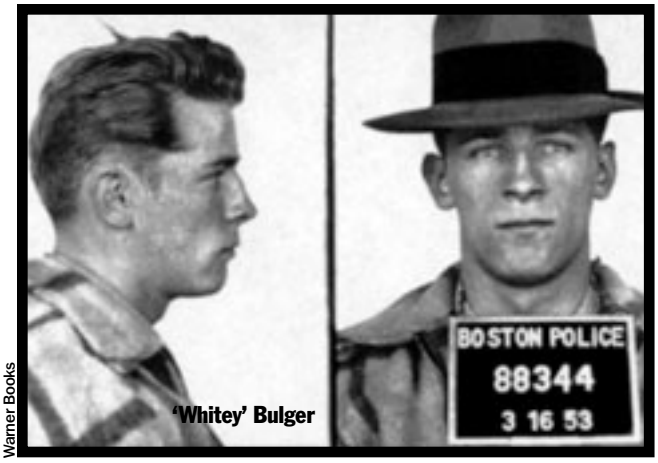

'Whitey' Bulger

Warner Books

Billy Bulger and friend

nounced like a "j") brothers? Billy, the younger of the two, was once the Democratic president of the Massachusetts Senate, and thus arguably the state's most powerful politician. Later, with the help of then-Governor William Weld, a Republican—who recently abandoned his badly listing campaign for governor of New York—Billy was handed the presidency of the University of Massachusetts. The current governor, Mitt Romney, a Republican now running for president, managed to pry him from that sinecure after Bulger's remarkably craven performance at a 2003 congressional hearing.

Congress was looking into his relationship with his big brother, James "Whitey" Bulger, a (reputed) vicious killer and mobster who rose to the distinction of becoming the FBI's No. 2 most wanted criminal behind Osama bin Laden. While still a senator, Billy went to an arranged location in 1995 to take a call from his fugitive brother, apparently to avoid electronic eavesdropping. Billy said that accepting the call from the gangster without bothering to inform the FBI was "in no way inconsistent with my devotion to my own responsibilities, my public responsibilities." That sums up how seriously Billy took his public responsibilities.

I covered the Massachusetts Statehouse a bit during the early 1990s when Billy Bulger was Senate president. At times, that meant standing on the marble floor in the hallway outside his ornate office—I was never invited in—and waiting for Mr. Bulger to emerge with some prepared witticism and an air of obvious irritation at being asked anything.

It was interesting to observe how the wit had flown during the hearing of the House Committee on Government Reform, when Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana asked Billy a simple question under oath: What did Bulger think his brother Whitey did for a living? "I had the feeling that he was uh in the business of gaming and and uh . . . Whatever. It was vague to me but I didn't think, uh—for a long while he had some jobs but uh ultimately uh it was clear that he was not uh um being um uh you know he wasn't doing what I'd like him to do."

He was in the business, authorities said, of money laundering, drugs, racketeering, and murder. That Billy Bulger, a cold, shrewd, and calculating man, was blissfully unaware of any of this defies belief. Billy's South Boston home was located just yards away from the house of Whitey's mobster associate Stevie Flemmi. The Feds called it a "clubhouse" for Whitey's Winter Hill Gang. It was there, Carr observes, that Whitey strangled Stevie's 26-year-old girlfriend, Debra Davis. And it was there that Whitey and Stevie huddled on Sundays with FBI agents, whom they bribed with cash, jewelry, and wine.

Carr tells the tale of the Bulger brothers' involvement in advancing the FBI career of South Boston boy John "Zip" Connolly, now residing in federal prison. Through Connolly, Whitey became an informant for the FBI, helping it go after the Italian Mafia. Whitey enjoyed the government's protection while his mob competition in Boston was erased.

Connolly, meanwhile, worked on the senator's campaigns, and Billy Bulger urged his fellow Southie pol Ray Flynn, mayor of Boston, to hire the corrupt agent as police commissioner. (Flynn wisely declined.)

"He's a special, special person," Connolly said of Billy. "He taught me the value of public service." Connolly ultimately began making so much money on the side—more than $200,000 from the mob, Carr asserts—that he let his government paychecks pile up, uncashed. The feds charged that he tipped off Whitey to an impending indictment in 1994, allowing the mobster to flee authorities and live off the fortune he amassed through crime—about $40 million, Carr estimates.

The author keeps the anecdotes flying. He recounts a story told by the late *Boston Globe* sportswriter Will McDonough, who grew up in Southie with the Bulgers. One day, when Will and Billy, then about 13 years old, were walking home from the beach, Whitey pulled up in a Cadillac convertible that neither of them had ever seen. They climbed in, and as they drove along, Billy spotted a kid his age pedaling a bicycle with an ice-cream chest attached to the handlebars.

"I never liked that kid," Billy said. Whitey followed the boy, and bumped the back of his bike with his fender, while the terrified boy tried to get away, racing toward Broadway. Billy told his

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brother he simply said he didn't like the kid; he didn't say to kill him.

"We're not going to kill him," Whitey answered. "When he gets to Broadway and barrels out into the street, the bus'll kill him." That passed for charming banter in the Bulger circle.

Why didn't the press more vigorously pursue the Bulgers? When Paul Corsetti, a Vietnam veteran and police reporter for the *Boston Herald*, began looking into a gangland murder, and Whitey's involvement in it, he ran into a stranger in a bar.

"I'm Jimmy Bulger and I kill people," the stranger told Corsetti. Then Bulger pulled out a piece of paper and began reciting to the reporter: Corsetti's address in Medford; the make, model, and license number of his car, and that of his wife; and such information about Corsetti's preschool daughter as where she was dropped off at day care each morning, and when. According to Carr, Corsetti began wearing a .38-caliber revolver to work—and it was five years before the Boston media looked seriously at Whitey again.

Many people who were more powerful than any mobster joined in promoting Billy Bulger. Religious leaders and politicians, including John Kerry and Edward Kennedy, flocked to Billy's annual St. Patrick's Day breakfasts, where the good old boys traded jokes about political bullying. The Bush family developed a fondness for Billy after he helped deep-six the 1988 presidential campaign of Michael Dukakis, Billy's fellow (but far more liberal) Democrat, with advice to the Bush campaign to look into the putrid condition of Boston Harbor. After winning the White House, George H.W. Bush gratefully phoned in quips on St. Patrick's Day, helping underscore Billy's clout. And in 2002, President George W. Bush's Justice Department stonewalled Congress on FBI documents that might have embarrassed Billy.

The ultimate effect of it all might be depressing, in that Whitey escaped to enjoy his millions on the run, and continues to do so more than a decade later, while Billy left the University of Massachusetts with a settlement that cost taxpayers $960,000, plus a steady pension check from Massachusetts—which, after taxes, came to $11,312.29 a month. Except that, thanks in part to *The Brothers Bulger*, Billy and Whitey will not escape the judgment of history, and such productions as Billy's self-serving autobiography, *While The Music Lasts*, will be seen for the claptrap it is. Continued exposure of the Bay State's often tribal and corrupt politics should alert perceptive critics to pertinent questions about Massachusetts politicians who rise from the muck.

As Whitey's gangster associate Kevin Weeks once testified, when asked how the power, reach, and connections of the brothers Bulger could have been covered up, or ignored, in America: "We weren't in America. We were in Boston." ♦

Really Big Shows

Blockbusters yield a new generation.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

It's become accepted wisdom that the Era of the Blockbuster, which began with the release of *Jaws* in the summer of 1975 and has continued unabated to this day, has been a disaster for the mainstream American cinema. The possibility of producing monster hits that will, in turn, spawn monster sequels and theme-park rides and video games and ringtones and who knows what else has spelled doom for smaller, more personal, studio-made movies—the kinds of emotionally resonant movies that helped make the cinema the dominant art form of the 20th century.

Now that the era has entered its fourth decade, it's fair to say that the Blockbuster has become a genre unto itself. That means it has its own rules, its own distinct style, its own method of storytelling, and its own quirks and foibles.

The Blockbuster invariably features a villain who's vastly more amusing, entertaining, and inspiring than the bland hero; a storyline that, despite budgets of hundreds of millions in production costs, resembles nothing so much as a mannequin on which to drape special-effects sequences like bolts of cloth; a gasp-inducing depiction of death and destruction that destroys thousands or even millions of people but is not really meant to discomfit in any way; and a setting that leans heavily on the fantastic.

Every Blockbuster, like every great magician, aims to show its audience a trick never before seen that will be so awe-inspiring it will cause viewers to want to see the film again just to get another glimpse at it. For the new *Superman Returns*, director Bryan Singer came up with an inspired visual gimmick to test just how bullet-retardant the Man of Steel really might be. A bullet shot from a machine gun aimed directly at Superman's eye harmlessly knocks on his obsidian iris, and then simply falls to the ground. According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, the total cost of that effect and the 45-second scene around it was $2.3 million.

Despite the obscene expense, this is a witty and unexpected moment, and it and other Blockbuster moments like it prove that the genre hasn't entirely destroyed Hollywood. In *Spider-Man 2*, the hassled Peter Parker, reduced to hauling pizzas around New York to

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Keira Knightley, Johnny Depp in 'Pirates of the Caribbean II'

Buena Vista Pictures

pay his rent, despite possessing arachnid superpowers, desperately uses his Spider-Man skills to try and make a delivery under the allotted 30 minutes—and still doesn't make it in time. That scene is as well conceived and executed as a bit of Golden Age Hollywood comedy.

The same can be said of Johnny Depp's turn as Jack Sparrow, the Groucho Marx of the West Indies, in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. Sparrow is one of the great comic creations in the history of the cinema, and filmgoers around the world have now twice greeted his arrival with a joyous parade. Depp took a well-written character and unleashed a crazed originality upon it.

"I imagined those pirates out in the open sea with extreme heat, no escape from the sun and humidity," he said in a recent interview, "so I thought it would be interesting to jack up a sauna pretty good and see how long I could take it. I cranked it up to, like, 240 degrees. I was cooking. That degree of heat makes you sort of move involuntarily. That's where all of Captain Jack's jerky movements come from."

Depp had signed on to do a movie based on a Disneyland ride for kids, a film his costar Keira Knightley has said "we all thought was going to be s—and tank." But largely because Depp committed himself so deeply to this job for a paycheck, it turned into something unexpected and special. The second *Pirates* offers few unexpected joys, but it, too, has been lovingly crafted and thought-out, and the seriousness with which its creative team took the challenge of fashioning a memorable follow-up to the original justifies the unprecedented torrents of money that have rained down on them since the sequel opened more than a week ago.

In recent years, the Blockbuster has taken a surprising turn. Filmmakers who grew up in the Blockbuster Era—like *Superman Returns*' Singer, *Spider-Man*'s Sam Raimi, Gore Verbinski of *Pirates*, Christopher Nolan of *Batman Begins*, and Peter Jackson of *King Kong*—have sought to put their own personal stamp on the genre just as directors of the 1960s and '70s did with the classic genres of Hollywood's Golden Age. Their Blockbusters are still corporate behemoths, funded lavishly so that they could not only pay for themselves but also create ancillary streams of cash for years to come.

Still, these are more heartfelt creations than the Blockbusters that preceded them, whose directors and writers are trying to evoke more complicated emotions than simply the exhilaration that comes at the end of a rollercoaster. For most adult moviegoers, they are not fulfilling fare because they do not tell stories about the world in which we live. But maybe the teenage boys for whom they are primarily intended are getting a better sense these days of what things movies can do besides showing aliens blowing up things. ♦

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Parody

No reason in the world explains the desperate act of a man—no provocation, no nasty remark, will ever tell us why the planetary icon that Zinedine Zidane had become, a man more admired than the Pope, the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela put together, a demigod, a chosen one, this great priest-by-consensus of the new religion and the new empire in the making, chose to explode right there, rather than wait a few minutes to settle the quarrel on the sidelines.

—From 'Zidane' by Bernard-Henri Lévy,* Wall Street Journal, *July 11.

Casey at ze Bat

By Bernard-Henri Lévy

Ze outlook was not, how you say, brilliant for ze Mudville *neuf*, yes? It was ze last, ze inning *finale*, ze *dernière chance de la bataille suprême de baseball*. Ze score it was a nothing, *petit*, putrid—*pffff*—*bourgeois quatre-deux*, and ze outs, *malheureusement*, ze outs zey are *deux*. *Mais* Blake was safe *à deuxième*, and Flynn he was ze-hugging *à troisième*. So! Zere arose from ze *spectateurs* a lusty yell—you know—*une grande* scream, a sound of ze wind *très fort*, much noise, *oui?*

Alors! Avance à la Bat ze Mighty Casey! Comes ze pitch *première*, le Casey *magnifique* he say it is not his style, yes, *mais l'Umpire dit*: "Strike One!" *Eh bien, le deuxième* pitch *arrive* and le Casey is, you know, *nonchalant, et mon dieu!* "Strike Two!" *Mais finalement*, it is ze Mighty Casey he strike out *et, mes enfants, la joie en Mudville—ça n'existe pas.*

Au nom de l'humanité, how could zis happen? A man like ze Mighty Casey—*un homme*, yes, *un homme formidable, suprême*, ultimate, ze god in ze pinstripes—in him zey live ze dreams, ze prayers *des filles et des garçons de* Mudville, zey are in his bat; he is ze Home Run Baker et Joséphine Baker rolled into one, yes? Ze tears *elles tombent* like ze great tree in ze forest—*boom!*—and to Casey, we say: *Pourquoi?*

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